

CHAPTER IX

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

(New Standards effective January 1, 2025)

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation of Funeral Service Education programs is intended to help ensure that the same basic elements of funeral service education apply regardless of where a student is educated. Standards have been developed to foster this goal.

Accreditation decisions, including Candidacy, are based upon compliance with the Standards.

Accredited programs will be referred to as programs throughout the Standards whether offered by a single purpose institution or multi-purpose institution. Provisions to address the specific characteristics of the different types of institutions and different delivery modalities do exist.

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.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND ADMINISTRATION

- 1.1 The institution must provide evidence that it assumes responsibility for:
 - 1.1.1 curriculum content,
 - 1.1.2 classroom teaching, distance instruction, clinical education, including clinical field experience,
 - 1.1.3 appointment and evaluation of faculty,
 - 1.1.4 policies and procedures for institutional admission, as well as program admission if that process differs,
 - 1.1.5 approval by the appropriate governing authority in which it is located or within which it offers instruction to award the diploma, certificate and/or degree(s) for which it seeks accreditation, and
 - 1.1.6 awarding a diploma, certificate, or degree documenting completion of the program based upon the federal definition of credit hour (see [Appendix S](#)).
 - 1.1.7 distance education (where applicable) see [Appendix E](#).
 - 1.1.7.a Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate that the program is authorized to operate where its students reside.
 - 1.1.7.b Institutions with fifty percent (50%) or more of their program available through distance education must demonstrate how distance education is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.
- 1.2 If a program is associated with, or financially sponsored by, an organization whose main purpose is other than education, the program must provide written evidence of sufficient separation between the sponsoring organization and the program to guarantee an effective, independent, and objective learning environment.
- 1.3 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.
 - 1.3.1 The institution must provide a complete list of members of the governing board.
 - 1.3.2 The institution must maintain the by-laws, agenda, minutes or other governing documents pertaining to the governing board for review since the last comprehensive review. These documents must be available for review by the site visit team.
- 1.4 Programs must have a nine (9) member advisory board.
 - 1.4.1 Advisory board is to be composed of:
 - 1.4.1.a at least seven (7) funeral service practitioners who are graduates of ABFSE accredited programs
 - 1.4.1.b at least 1 student representative
 - 1.4.1.c at least 1 member of the public
 - 1.4.2 Advisory board meetings must occur at least once annually.
 - 1.4.3 Minutes of advisory board meetings must be maintained since the last comprehensive review.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The administration of the institution must:
 - 1.6.1 provide educational leadership to establish learning opportunities for students that are current and require a level of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded,
 - 1.6.2 create working conditions that support faculty productivity,
 - 1.6.3 demonstrate that an effective process exists for communication flow both downward and upward within the entire organization and the program.
- 1.7 An institution must have a published mission and demonstrate student success relative to that mission.
- 1.8 Organizational charts showing the hierarchy from the governing board to the program level must demonstrate support of mission. Organizational structure should include units related to assessment/evaluation and distance education.

- 1.9 The funeral service education program must be administered as follows:
- 1.9.1 A single purpose institution 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.
- 1.9.1.a This officer may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced to reflect administrative duties.
- 1.9.2 Each program must have a program director (or comparable title) meeting the following
- 1.9.2.a must be a full-time employee of the institution.
- 1.9.2.b must be primarily responsible for the operation, supervision, evaluation and revision of the program.
- 1.9.2.c must be a graduate of an ABFSE accredited program.
- 1.9.2.d must possess a valid license to practice as a funeral service professional.
- 1.9.2.e must possess an academic background consistent with the position of leadership held.
- 1.9.2.e.i. This will always involve a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university. If a Program Director starts in the position without a master's degree, the degree must be earned within five years of the date of the initial full-time appointment in funeral service education.
- 1.9.2.e.ii. For program directors 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 American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) are acceptable or similar to those of the ABFSE.
- 1.9.2.f Program Director may also be a member of the teaching faculty as long as the teaching load is reduced to reflect administrative duties.

STANDARD 2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 2.1 The mission of an ABFSE-accredited program must be to educate students in every phase of funeral service so that program graduates are prepared for entry-level employment in funeral service. In support of this mission, a program must adopt at least the following Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of an accredited program, students will be able to:

- 2.1.1 Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families and communities they serve.
- 2.1.2 Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
- 2.1.3 Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance.
- 2.1.4 Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains.
- 2.1.5 Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation and handling of human remains.
- 2.1.6 Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies.
- 2.1.7 Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final disposition of human remains.
- 2.1.8 Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
- 2.1.9 Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
- 2.1.10 Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.
- 2.2 These Program Learning Outcomes must be published on the program website and in the program handbook.

STANDARD 3: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

- 3.1 Each institution and program must conduct their business and academic activities in an ethical manner.

Includes: Manual Update approved October 2025
Manual update proposals Summer 2025
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Fee Revisions approved April 2022

ABFSE and COA Accreditation and Policy Manual

Revised Standards effective January 1, 2020
Revised Standards effective January 1, 2025

- 1 3.1.1 In this regard, each institution program must:
- 2 3.1.1.a publish and adhere to a personnel policy assuring equal employment opportunity for all
- 3 qualified persons
- 4 3.1.1.b demonstrate that processes are in place to protect student privacy.
- 5 3.1.2 maintain admissions, financial aid, and education services policies for students assuring equal
- 6 consideration without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or
- 7 veterans' status and other protected classes pursuant to federal law.
- 8 3.1.3 ensure that website/catalog accurately portrays the realities of the program and institution so that
- 9 students can make informed decisions before admissions. Advertising and marketing materials must
- 10 include a link to the website/catalog.
- 11 3.1.3.a Each institution must publish curriculum and program of study information including:
- 12 3.1.3.a.i course names and identification numbers;
- 13 3.1.3.a.ii summary descriptions and credit hours;
- 14 3.1.3.a.iii requirements for admission;
- 15 3.1.3.a.iv requirements and processes for withdrawal and graduation;
- 16 3.1.3.a.v academic calendars;
- 17 3.1.3.a.vi policy regarding changes in modality of course offerings;
- 18 3.1.3.a.vii grading policies;
- 19 3.1.3.a.viii financial policies for tuition, fees, and refunds.
- 20 3.1.3.a.ix information about the potential challenges of distance education
- 21 3.1.3.a.x information regarding on-campus requirements for distance education
- 22 3.1.3.a.xi technology requirements
- 23 3.1.3.a.xii protocols used to verify student identity including additional charges
- 24 associated with verification, if applicable
- 25 3.1.4. The institution must maintain proper records and reports as follows:
- 26 3.1.4.a Secure filing systems for student academic records must exist and policies must be in place
- 27 to ensure maintenance of these records in perpetuity.
- 28 3.1.4.b Program records, such as clinical reports, surveys, affiliation agreements and accreditation-
- 29 related documents must be organized and maintained from the date of the last
- 30 comprehensive review. Institutional oversight and procedures must be in place to ensure
- 31 maintenance and continuity of these records when personnel changes take place.
- 32 3.1.4.c Student academic transcripts must indicate the quality of the student's work in each course
- 33 and the extent of each course, expressed in either semester or quarter credits. Grading
- 34 systems must be explained on the transcript.
- 35 3.1.5. In the event a program ceases to function, a plan must be in place to ensure maintenance of student
- 36 academic records in perpetuity.
- 37
- 38 3.2 Any reference by a program to accreditation in catalogs, bulletins, or other official publications and
- 39 communication or other media must read as follows:
- 40

41 Programs in a multi-purpose institution will use:

42

43 The (name of the accredited degree program) at (name of sponsoring institution) is accredited by the

44 American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights,

45 NJ 08097 (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org

46

47 When ABFSE serves as 'gatekeeper' for the single purpose institution the statement should read: (name of

48 sponsoring institution) and the (name of the accredited degree program) are accredited by the American

49 Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097

50 (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org

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52 NOTE: The reference to accreditation must name the specific program accredited by the ABFSE. If the

53 institution offers more than one degree (or its equivalent) program accredited by ABFSE, the names

54 of all accredited programs must appear in the accreditation statement. (This requirement is

particularly important in those institutions offering other areas of instruction which are not accredited, or eligible for accreditation, by the ABFSE.)

- 3.3 ABFSE accredited institutions or programs which choose to offer unaccredited programs, in addition to one or more accredited programs, must comply with the following procedures:
- 3.3.1 Publications describing the unaccredited 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 will not have the academic credential for licensure in states where graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required.”
- 3.3.2 In addition, the academic transcript for graduates of unaccredited 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 will not have the academic credential for licensure in states where graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required.”
- 3.3.3 The requirements of Standard 3.3 do not apply to a bachelor degree completion program which requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program as a condition for admission.
- 3.4 Published policies must exist which ensure due process for students, faculty, and staff, including grievance procedures, clearly defined disciplinary policies, and sexual harassment policies.
- 3.4.1 All written student complaints about the program that follow the institution’s or other governing entity’s stated procedure must be available for review.
- 3.4.2 The program must file a written response or demonstrate resolution of complaints that have been received.
- 3.5 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:
- 3.5.1 Providing false, misleading, or distorted information directly or by omission to the ABFSE or Committee of Accreditation (COA);
- 3.5.2 Engaging in illegal conduct;
- 3.5.3 Presenting false information to students, faculty, staff or the public;
- 3.5.4 Engaging in intentional conduct that is coercive to students or prejudicial to student learning or outcomes
- 3.5.5 Any other conduct that is generally regarded as unethical in higher education, accreditation of educational programs and institutions, or funeral service
- 3.6 See also Standards 4, 6.3, 9.1, and 11 for additional topics subject to Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards

STANDARD 4: FINANCE

- 4.1 The institution/program must have sustainable and sufficient financial resources to provide instruction and facilities in compliance with this manual.
- 4.2 The program must have resources budgeted on a continuing basis that are sufficient to provide instruction, current technology, equipment, student and academic support in compliance with this manual’s standards.
- 4.3 The institution must have processes in place to address unexpected expenditures.
- 4.4 The Executive Director of the ABFSE must be notified of any unexpected expenditures or revenue shortfalls that might impact instruction or compliance with this manual’s standards.
- 4.5 A program in a multiple-purpose institution must have program level involvement in the budget development process.

- 4.6 The institution must employ acceptable accounting practices and must provide the most current audited financial statements. Any audit exceptions or advisories that appear in the most recent audit must be reported to the Executive Director of the ABFSE.
- 4.7 Institutions for whom the ABFSE acts as gatekeeper :
 - 4.7.1 must demonstrate a ratio of current assets to current liabilities that is at least 1:1 for the most recent fiscal year.
 - 4.7.2 must maintain copies of all education-related contracts in force since the last comprehensive review.
 - 4.7.3 The financial accounting system for gatekeeper institutions may not be combined with financial affairs of any other organizations

STANDARD 5: CURRICULUM

- 5.1 The ABFSE recognizes the Associate Degree, or its equivalent, as the minimum educational standard for preparation for the funeral service profession.
 - 5.1.1 The program must consist of not less than sixty (60) semester (90 quarter) credits.
- 5.2 The program must have and follow an organized curriculum plan.
 - 5.2.1 The plan must follow a logical sequence and result in a diploma or degree appropriate to the length and depth of the curriculum.
 - 5.2.2 Semester or quarter credit hours must be assigned to all courses and apportioned appropriately.
 - 5.2.3 A syllabus must be available for each course offered in the program and follow a consistent format. Each syllabus must include relevant student learning outcomes and must be distributed to students at the beginning of that course. The student learning outcomes for each course must be reviewed on a continuing basis and be aligned with the Program Learning Outcomes.
 - 5.2.4 All required prerequisite courses must be clearly indicated in institutional publications.
 - 5.2.5 The program curriculum must consist of at least two components: general education courses and funeral service courses. At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total credits must be in the general education component.
 - 5.2.6 Instruction must be at a postsecondary education level and encourage individual growth and critical thinking.
 - 5.2.7 The program must require student use of multiple learning resources reflecting a variety of points of view.
 - 5.2.8 Students must be evaluated at reasonable intervals and kept informed of their progress in a timely manner.
- 5.3 When the funeral service education program and/or courses are delivered via the distance modality the guidelines in [Appendix E](#) must be followed. These guidelines include securing necessary approvals, providing effective student and academic support services and faculty training, assuring integrity of distance offerings, maintaining regular and substantive interaction, assessment, and generally assuring that distance offerings and traditional modes of instruction are comparable.
- 5.4 Accredited programs may decide how to implement the ABFSE content areas. Course offerings in the accredited program must cover the content of the ABFSE curriculum outlines; however, course names may differ from the curriculum outline titles.
- 5.5 Each program must document curriculum distribution by ABFSE content area by completing [Form B-6](#) and/or [Form B-6B](#), "Curriculum Distribution by ABFSE Content Area." (found in Appendix B)
The accredited degree program must be distributed across these content areas:
 - 5.5.1 Public Health and Technical fourteen (14) minimum semester (21 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:
 - 5.5.1.a Chemistry
 - 5.5.1.b Microbiology
 - 5.5.1.c Human Anatomy
 - 5.5.1.d Pathology
 - 5.5.1.e Restorative Art

- 5.5.1.f Embalming
- 5.5.2 Business Management and Professional sixteen (16) minimum semester (24 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:
- 5.5.2.a Funeral Service Management
- 5.5.2.b Funeral Merchandising
- 5.5.2.c Cremation
- 5.5.2.d Funeral Directing
- 5.5.2.e Small Business Management with Accounting
- 5.5.2.f Professional or Business Communications
- 5.5.3 Social Sciences/Humanities six (6) minimum semester (9 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve distribution of study in the following content areas:
- 5.5.3.a Sociology
- 5.5.3.b History of Funeral Service and Embalming
- 5.5.4.c Funeral Service Psychology and Counseling
- 5.5.4 Legal, Ethical, Regulatory three (3) minimum semester (4 quarter) credits.
- 5.5.4.a Funeral Service Law
- 5.5.4.b Business Law
- 5.5.4.c Ethics
- 5.5.4.d Federal Trade Commission
- 5.5.5 General Education – Each associate degree student must earn a minimum of sixty (60) (90 quarter) credits; each bachelor degree student must earn a minimum of 120 (180 quarter) credits of which at least twenty-five percent (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. Courses labeled as Funeral Service/Mortuary Science by course name or number are not appropriate as General Education.
- 5.5.6 Embalming is a requirement of the curriculum:
- 5.5.6.a Each student must actively participate in at least ten embalming cases in order to fulfill the clinical embalming component of the curriculum.
- 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.
- 5.5.6.b Active participation means hands-on learning and must include, at a minimum, the following tasks:
- 5.5.6.b.i raising vessels
- 5.5.6.b.ii mixing fluids
- 5.5.6.b.iii injecting fluids
- 5.5.6.b.iv cavity treatment
- 5.5.6.b.v suturing incisions
- 5.5.6.b.vi posing features
- 5.5.6.c There shall be no more than five (5) students per case receiving credit for a specific embalming. Additional students may observe; however, they may not interrupt or interfere with the embalming process or distract the preceptor while the embalming is in process. Credit for individual cases will be allowed only for those students actively participating.
- 5.5.6.d A standardized embalming case report must be used by the program to validate student participation and must be signed by the student and the instructor or preceptor. Each case report must document details of :
- 5.5.6.d.i embalming treatments
- 5.5.6.d.ii the student's participation in the case
- 5.5.6.e A qualified faculty member as defined in Standard 6.1.1 must assess and document, in person, the minimal technical competence of each student prior to graduation.

- 5.5.6.f Embalming case reports must be retained since the last comprehensive visit.
- 5.5.6.g Embalming cases must be completed in an on-campus setting or at an approved off-campus instructional site.
- 5.5.6.h Off-campus embalming instructional sites where students receive college credit are to be inspected and approved by a qualified faculty member as defined in Standard 6.1.1. prior to the start of instruction. *See Standard 7.2*
- 5.5.7 Each student must participate in an on-campus laboratory setting in which the application of restorative art principles is practiced.
- 5.5.8 Participation in Funeral Directing is a requirement of the curriculum.
 - 5.5.8.a Each student must actively participate in the funeral tasks included in this standard. These tasks can be done in a simulation setting.
 - 5.5.8.b Students must utilize the following forms:
 - 5.5.8.b.i First call form
 - 5.5.8.b.ii Arrangement worksheet
 - 5.5.8.b.iii FTC-compliant General Price List
 - 5.5.8.b.iv FTC-compliant Casket Price List
 - 5.5.8.b.v FTC-compliant Outer Burial Container Price List
 - 5.5.8.b.vi Embalming Authorization form
 - 5.5.8.b.vii Cremation Authorization form
 - 5.5.8.c First call – Students must demonstrate the process of receiving five (5) first calls. This can be done in a simulation setting.
 - 5.5.8.d Transfer of remains – Students must demonstrate the process of performing a body removal. This can be done in a simulation setting.
 - 5.5.8.e Arrangement Conference – Students must participate (observe or assist) in five (5) Arrangement Conferences. If done in a simulation setting, no more than five (5) students may receive credit for that simulation.
 - 5.5.8.f Students must prepare the following at least one time:
 - 5.5.8.f.i Death Certificate
 - 5.5.8.f.ii Burial Transit permit
 - 5.5.8.f.iii Social Security form (Statement of Death by Funeral Director)
 - 5.5.8.f.iv Death notice and/or Obituary
 - 5.5.8.f.v FTC-compliant Statement of Funeral Good and Services Selected
 - 5.5.8.f.vi Department of Veterans Affairs forms – flag application, burial benefits, and headstone/marker
 - 5.5.8.f.vi Final disposition permit
 - 5.5.8.g. Students must demonstrate the process of dressing/casketing/preparation for disposition.
 - 5.5.8.h. Funeral Observation – Students must attend five funeral related practices; at least one must be live and in-person. 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). Credit may be awarded for only one experience per case. (i.e. the same funeral cannot satisfy a liturgical service and a graveside service) The program will ensure that students attend a variety of services.
 - 5.5.8.i Method of documenting student’s funeral observation shall be at the discretion of the program, but records must be maintained since the last comprehensive review.
- 5.6 The only Bachelor degree option recognized for accreditation by ABFSE is a degree leading to original licensure. There are no provisions in the standards to evaluate Bachelor degree completion or Associate Bachelor degree options (when the original associate degree meets all accreditation requirements).
 - 5.6.1 The institution must demonstrate that it has approval to award the bachelor degree(s), issued by the appropriate governing authority in which it is located or within which it offers instruction. (See Standard 1.1.5)
 - 5.6.2 The bachelor degree program must consist of not less than 120 semester (180 quarter) credits including the ABFSE prescribed curriculum in Standard 5.5. The degree program must be described in a B-6B curriculum distribution.

- 1 5.6.3 Instruction must be at a level generally held commensurate with postsecondary education at the
2 bachelor degree level and directed toward the individual growth of each student encouraging
3 critical thinking and requiring student use of multiple learning resources reflecting a variety of
4 points of view.
- 5 5.6.4 Thirty percent (30%) (minimum of 40 semester credits or equivalent) of the bachelor program
6 must consist of upper division coursework (including the major and general education). The
7 academic credit awarded for upper division courses within baccalaureate degree programs must be
8 clearly distinguished from that of lower division courses via [Form B-6B](#).
- 9 5.6.5 At least thirty (30) semester credits (or equivalent) of general education is required (25%),
10 including at least nine (9) semester credits (or equivalent) of upper division general education
11 coursework.

12 13 14 **STANDARD 6: FACULTY**

- 15
16 6.1 Members of the teaching faculty must meet certain degree and professional requirements in order to be
17 deemed qualified faculty members:
- 18 6.1.1 All full-time or part-time faculty must have a bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally
19 accredited college or university.
- 20 6.1.2 All newly and re-appointed full-time faculty must earn a master's degree or higher from a regionally
21 accredited college or university within five years of their initial appointment date. Faculty who fail
22 to meet the five-year requirement are not allowed to teach in any ABFSE accredited program until
23 the degree is awarded. For faculty earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United
24 States, the institution awarding the degree must have met degree standards which in the judgment
25 of AACRAO are acceptable or similar to those of ABFSE.
- 26 6.1.3 Degrees must be documented by official transcripts.
- 27 6.1.4 Qualified faculty members who teach embalming, funeral directing, or restorative art courses must
28 be graduates of an ABFSE-accredited program. If the faculty member graduated from a funeral
29 service program outside the United States, the program must have academic requirements and
30 standards equivalent to an ABFSE-accredited program. The following additional requirements must
31 also be met:
- 32 6.1.4.a a faculty member teaching embalming must have sufficient training to enable proper
33 instruction, have at least one year of embalming experience, and be a licensed embalmer
34 where required by law. Clinical embalming instructors must be licensed in the state where
35 they teach (where required by law).
- 36 6.1.4.b a faculty member teaching funeral directing, merchandising or funeral service management
37 must have sufficient training and experience in funeral service practice to enable proper
38 instruction, and be licensed to practice funeral directing where required by law;
- 39 6.1.4.c a faculty member teaching restorative art must have sufficient training and experience to
40 enable proper instruction, and be licensed to practice embalming where required by law;
- 41 6.1.4.d a faculty member teaching other required or elective courses must have sufficient
42 specialized education or experience in these subjects to enable proper instruction.
- 43 6.2 All personnel serving as off-campus preceptors must be licensed to practice funeral directing, embalming or
44 both where required by law. Preceptors must be graduates of ABFSE accredited programs. If the preceptor
45 graduated from a funeral service program outside the United States, the program must have academic
46 requirements and standards equivalent to an ABFSE accredited program.
- 47 6.2.1 Preceptor credentials must be verified by the program in one of the following ways:
- 48 6.2.1.a Have on file an official transcript from the ABFSE accredited funeral service program from
49 which the preceptor graduated plus a copy of the preceptor's state license where required
50 by law;
- 51 6.2.1.b If the state requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program, have on file a copy of
52 the preceptor's license from the state licensing authority.
- 53 6.2.1.c Have on file a copy of (or be able to provide access to) verification from the State web site
54 that the preceptor has a current license in good standing (if the state requires graduation

- from an ABFSE accredited program).
- 6.2.2 If preceptors are used, there must be an identified certification process in place and formal documentation that each preceptor has been properly oriented about the school's requirements concerning knowledge base, competency, and evaluation of student procedures and criteria.
- 6.3 All faculty and staff must adhere to ethical practices in student-related matters.
- 6.4 Faculty development opportunities must be available for all modes of instruction.
- 6.4.1 The program must provide evidence of training for faculty without prior teaching experience.
- 6.4.2 Ongoing professional development for faculty must be available. Such opportunities must consider professional development for teaching and continuing education for maintaining licensure.
- 6.4.3 The program must provide evidence of training for faculty teaching distance education courses who do not have prior distance teaching experience.
- 6.4.4 The institution offering distance education must provide evidence that faculty have access to periodic distance-focused faculty development as technology and best practices for e-learning evolve.
- 6.5 Faculty must be involved in maintaining the academic program including standards pertaining to instruction.
- 6.6 The institution must provide instructional support for faculty, including library access, office facilities, technological resources, and involvement in program planning and assessment.
- 6.7 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, and no more than 25:1 headcount for laboratory sessions, no more than a 5:1 headcount may be maintained for each clinical embalming case and no instructor may supervise more than 3 embalming cases at any one time.
- 6.8 Every program is required to have at least two full-time faculty members, one of whom shall serve in the role of the program director. (by January 1, 2027)

STANDARD 7: FACILITIES

- 7.1 Facilities refer to classrooms, laboratories, and any other physical areas used for instruction. Areas must be adequate in number and size and must allow for quality instruction to support the program and to meet the needs of students.
- 7.1.1 Classrooms and laboratories must have adequate light and ventilation. They must be cleaned and furnished with adequate equipment and supplies for carrying out instruction.
- 7.1.2 The laboratories must have sufficient equipment and supplies for students to work in small groups or individually. Sufficient equipment and supplies must be available to carry out all research and instruction mentioned in program and institution's publications. The equipment must be current with funeral service practice.
- 7.1.3 All instructional facilities on or off-campus must meet federal, state, provincial/territorial, and local regulations.
- 7.1.4 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 facility.
- 7.2 The following is for off-campus instructional sites which includes instruction for management, funeral directing and embalming clinical. Whenever students receive program credit for work carried out off the main campus, the following facilities requirements must be in effect:
- 7.2.1 The facility where students receive credit must be licensed by the appropriate authorities;
- 7.2.2 Off-campus instruction must take place in locations which offer adequate learning space for students. In the case of instruction in embalming, the facility must be of sufficient size to allow for satisfactory participation by each student.
- 7.2.3 Inspections of off-campus instructional sites must occur at least once every three years or prior to each use if the use occurs intermittently over a period of several years. Inspections must also occur whenever physical changes to the facility are reported.
- 7.2.3.a Inspections of off-campus instruction sites must ensure the location has a valid, current

- license.
- 7.2.3.b Inspections must ensure that off-campus sites are clean and adequate for instructional purposes.
 - 7.2.3.c The inspection must ensure that appropriate equipment and protocols (drench shower, eye wash station, SDS and blood borne pathogen program, ventilation system, proper protective equipment, etc.) are in place and functioning.
 - 7.2.4 The program/institution must have written affiliation agreements with each off-campus instructional site. Affiliation agreements must be comprehensive and include the following:
 - 7.2.4.a Responsibilities of the institution and the site.
 - 7.2.4.b Responsibilities relative to supervision and instruction of students and liability. This should include what is expected of the instructional site and what is provided by the program/institution.
 - 7.2.4.c. Personnel at the instructional site may be given faculty appointments by the institution.
 - 7.2.4.d The program must have a written policy for student dismissal and interruption from the clinical experience. Personnel at off-campus instructional sites must be aware of this policy.

STANDARD 8: LIBRARY / LEARNING RESOURCES

- 8.1 Learning resources, whether physical or electronic, must be both sufficient in scope and readily accessible to students to provide adequate support to the accredited program.
- 8.2. To the extent quality and availability affect program outcomes, learning resources that reflect a variety of points of view must be readily accessible to all students.
- 8.3 To the extent 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 as described in institutional and program publications.
 - 8.3.1 A written acquisition policy relevant to funeral service education must be in place and the program director and faculty must be involved with the annual acquisitions related to this program.
 - 8.3.2 Sufficient space must be devoted to learning resources to provide for the needs of students in funeral service and must be accessible during reasonable hours and administered by qualified staff.
 - 8.3.3 Learning resources must be catalogued according to a recognized standard method.
- 8.4 There must be in place an orientation for students regarding use of the available learning resources including use of the Internet, how to access course materials and how to access technological support.

STANDARD 9: STUDENTS

- 9.1 Ethical Practices:
 - 9.1.1 A program must adopt and enforce ethical practices recognized in higher education in all student-related matters. These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - 9.1.1.a presentation of clear and accurate information about the program;
 - 9.1.1.b student rights, responsibilities and processes;
 - 9.1.1.c program requirements;
 - 9.1.1.d a statement regarding program adherence to ethical practices in student-related matters must be published in program informational materials;
 - 9.1.2 All student policies and regulations must be equally applied to all students.
- 9.2 Admissions:
 - 9.2.1 Admissions requirements must be publicly stated in institutional publications including the catalog and must be administered as published.
 - 9.2.2 The minimum educational requirement for admission to a program is:
 - 9.2.2.a graduation from an accredited four-year high school or its recognized equivalent, or
 - 9.2.2.b a minimum of nine (9) semester hours (or the equivalent) of post-secondary coursework exclusive of developmental courses from a regionally accredited institution and a minimum 2.0 grade point average.

- 9.2.3 A student shall not be enrolled in a program until evidence is supplied that Standard 9.2 has been satisfied. Such evidence must be:
 - 9.2.3.a Official transcript of high school or college credit, received directly from the institution from which the credits were received or from a nationally recognized provider of electronic transcripts or
 - 9.2.3.b Evidence that the applicant has a recognized credential equivalent to the high school diploma. A credential must be certified by an authorized official of a recognized high school, the state department of education or its equivalent, or
 - 9.2.3.c Evidence that the applicant has fulfilled the requirements of state law for recognition of high school completion or its equivalent in the jurisdiction where the student resided at the time of completion.
 - 9.2.3.d 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 the United States.
 - 9.2.3.e 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 the United States.
- 9.2.4 Transfer credit policies must be published and available to students and the public. These policies must include:
 - 9.2.4.a the criteria for the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.
 - 9.2.4.b any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credits
 - 9.2.4.c a list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement
- 9.2.5 If credit for prior learning (experiential learning) is utilized by the program, a substantive change application must be submitted and approved by COA before the program initially offers credit for prior learning.
 - 9.2.5.a Policies for obtaining credit for prior learning must be clearly stated in the program's catalog and informational materials.
 - 9.2.5.b No more than twenty percent (20%) of the total number of credits for the program may be awarded through credit for prior learning. All of the curriculum requirements contained in Standard 5 are incorporated in awarding credit for prior learning.
 - 9.2.5.c Credit earned for prior learning must be documented, evaluated, and appropriate for the level of degree awarded. The evaluation must be carried out by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments.
 - 9.2.5.d Achievement of student learning outcomes must be measured for courses in which credit for prior learning is offered. Methods to determine achievement of outcomes may include standardized tests, prior learning portfolios, technical skill demonstrations, and written or oral exams.
- 9.3 Attendance, Progress, Graduation:
 - 9.3.1 Orientation must be offered to students prior to the start of coursework. Orientation may take place in-person or be delivered online and, at a minimum, must cover safety, student policies, facilities and student services.
 - 9.3.2 Policies regarding grading, academic progress, attendance and graduation must be clearly stated and provided to students in writing before starting coursework.
 - 9.3.3 Graduation must include a certification that all program and college requirements have been met.
- 9.4 Student Health and Safety:
 - 9.4.1 A program must have written policies and procedures ensuring safety of its students.
 - 9.4.2 The institution must have health services information available to students.
 - 9.4.3 Campus safety policies must be communicated to the students.
- 9.5 Guidance and Student Involvement:
 - 9.5.1 Students must have access to services for personal and academic matters. Services must address academic difficulty, veterans' affairs, academic advising, conduct, licensure and employment information and personal issues.
 - 9.5.2 Opportunities must exist for student involvement in program governance.

STANDARD 10: PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Each ABFSE accredited program must have a continuous system of planning and assessment in place to measure its effectiveness and to implement necessary improvements.
- 10.1.1 Each accredited program must have a documented assessment plan which incorporates guidelines, procedures, and methodologies of planning and assessment. The plan must:
- 10.1.1.a assess the ABFSE learning outcomes.
 - 10.1.1.b be in writing and approved by the appropriate administrative authority of the institution.
- 10.1.2 Each accredited program must establish a comprehensive, ongoing system of planning and assessment that ensures instructional quality and documents student outcomes. The assessment plan and system must include:
- 10.1.2.a provisions for collecting, maintaining, and analyzing data since the last comprehensive review;
 - 10.1.2.b methods for continuous feedback from students, faculty, and other constituents;
 - 10.1.2.c regularly scheduled student evaluations of courses and faculty;
 - 10.1.2.d regularly scheduled supervisory evaluation of faculty and program administrators;
 - 10.1.2.e results of annual surveys of graduates and employers to include satisfaction with instructional quality, preparation for employment, and expectations of employment;
 - 10.1.2.f methods used to measure the attainment of expected instructional outcomes;
 - 10.1.2.g review of clinical programs;
 - 10.1.2.h evaluation of advisory committee input;
 - 10.1.2.i curriculum review and updates;
 - 10.1.2.j review of written program materials such as handbooks, guidebooks, webpage;
 - 10.1.2.k facilities and technology updates;
 - 10.1.2.l review of program policies and procedures.
- 10.1.3 The continuous system of planning and assessment must:
- 10.1.3.a include documentation of how the assessment efforts are used to improve instructional and program quality.
 - 10.1.3.b be reviewed annually.
- 10.1.4 When funeral service courses are available via distance education, the institution must demonstrate that distance education is integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.
- 10.1.5 The program must assess the achievement of the Learning Outcomes in each of the following:
- 10.1.5.a courses
 - 10.1.5.b licensing exam pass rates
 - 10.1.5.c graduation rates
 - 10.1.5.d job placement/employment rates.
- 10.2 If the program has been evaluated previously by ABFSE, the program must document actions since the last review to correct any deficiencies that may have been cited in reference to the Standards.
- 10.3 Since the last comprehensive review, the program must maintain, calculate, and explain how it has utilized the following data for planning and assessment purposes:
- 10.3.1 Pass Rates on the National Board Examination (NBE): Accredited programs must report statistics for both the “Arts” and “Sciences” sections of the National Board Examination on the Annual Report.
- 10.3.2 Graduation/retention rates:
New Enrollee and Graduate information will be tracked by ABFSE and published in the Directory of Programs. New Enrollees will be tracked to graduation (or other departure from the program) upon entry into the ABFSE School Reporting system.
Graduation/retention rates based upon the number of new enrollees who successfully complete the accredited program (graduation) and those continuing their education (retention) will be reported after two (2) years and three (3) years.
- 10.3.3 Job placement/Employment rates:

- Graduate employment data is collected in the ABFSE School Reporting System and is included on the Annual Report. Job placement is to be calculated within six months of each student's graduation. A survey done at graduation will be accepted as 'within six (6) months.' Students for whom no data is available will be considered not employed. Funeral service-related employment, active military duty, or enrollment in further higher education count as employment for this calculation.
- 10.3.4 Graduation/retention, employment and NBE pass rates must be separately calculated for students who take fifty percent (50%) or more of their courses through Distance Education. The rates for campus based and distance education students will be considered both combined and separately in accreditation actions.
- 10.4 Programs maintaining satisfactory pass rates on the national licensing examination (NBE) will be considered in good standing.
- 10.4.1 Programs must maintain a seventy percent (70%) persistence pass rate on both the NBE Arts and NBE Sciences. Persistence Pass Rate will include all attempts by an individual within one year from graduation.
- 10.4.1.a A program that does not maintain satisfactory pass rates in a 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 substandard pass rate and detail plans for improvement. Failure to submit this report will lead to negative accreditation action.
- 10.4.1.b Failure to maintain satisfactory licensing examination pass rates for two consecutive years will result in an accreditation status of Probation
- 10.4.1.c Failure to meet Standard 10.4.1 for three (3) consecutive years will result in an accreditation status of 'Show Cause why accreditation should not be removed'.
- 10.4.2 When graduates do not take the national licensing examination (NBE), evidence of comparable performance on an alternate examination will be evaluated
- 10.5 Programs maintaining a sixty percent (60%) graduation/retention rate will be considered in good standing.
- 10.5.1 A program with a single year graduation/retention rate below sixty percent (60%) 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 substandard rate and detail plans for improvement. Failure to submit this report will lead to negative accreditation action. An institution with sporadic graduation/retention rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable reporting action as identified above.
- Note:** the sixty percent (60%) *brightline* will remain in effect while graduation/retention data is collected in order to determine if this is an appropriate measure of program quality
- 10.5.2 When the graduation/retention rates do not improve, the following accreditation status applies:
- 10.5.2.a two consecutive years of sub-standard graduation/retention rates: Probation.
- 10.5.2.b three consecutive years of sub-standard rates: 'Show Cause why accreditation should not be removed'.
- 10.6 Programs maintaining a sixty percent (60%) job placement/employment rate will be considered in good standing. (Definitions of employment are found in 10.3.3; *note:* FS-related and overall job placement are currently reported in the Directory <https://www.abfse.org/docs/ABFSEDirectory.pdf?page#14>)
- 10.6.1 A program with a single year employment rate below sixty percent (60%) 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 substandard employment rate and detail plans for improvement. Failure to submit this report will lead to negative accreditation action
- An institution with sporadic job/placement/employment rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable reporting action as identified above. **Note:** the sixty percent (60%) *brightline* will remain in effect while graduation/retention data is collected in order to determine if this is an appropriate measure of program quality.
- 10.6.2 When job placement/employment rates do not improve the following accreditation status applies:
- 10.6.2.a two (2) consecutive years of sub-standard employment rates: Probation.

- 10.6.2.b three (3) consecutive years of sub-standard rates: ‘Show Cause why accreditation should not be removed’
- 10.7 The pass rate of first-time takers on the National Board Examination (NBE), and program job/placement/employment rates and graduation/retention rates for the most recent three (3) year periods will be posted in the Directory of Accredited Programs on the ABFSE website.
- 10.7.1 So that the public and prospective students can easily access these and other datapoints, programs must maintain up-to-date information provided by the ABFSE on the program website.
- 10.7.2 The following statement must also appear in the institution’s catalog: “National Board Examination pass rates, graduation/retention rates, and job/placement/employment rates for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at www.abfse.org in the Directory of Accredited Programs.
- 10.7.3 Accredited programs in which students take fifty percent (50%) or more of their courses via distance education must also make available NBE pass rates, graduation/retention rates and employment rates for this modality.
- 10.7.4 Institutions failing to comply with Standard 10.7 will be placed on administrative probation immediately. Continued non-compliance may lead to the removal of accreditation.
- 10.8 Substandard rates for two (2) or more outcome metrics in the same year (graduation, employment and NBE pass rates) will result in the following action:
- 10.8.1 first year: Probation
- 10.8.2 second consecutive year: Accreditation is withdrawn unless good cause is shown to continue accreditation (Show Cause).

STANDARD 11: DEFAULT RATES IN THE STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS UNDER TITLE IV AND COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

This Standard applies to freestanding, single-purpose funeral service institutions for which ABFSE serves as the Title IV, HEA gatekeeper. An institution may request an exception if it holds recognition from another institutional accreditor.

- 11.1 Single purpose institutions for which the ABFSE serves as “gatekeeper” must also demonstrate compliance with all obligations under Title IV, including results of compliance audits and program reviews. (See Appendix F).
- 11.2 Recognizing the primary role of financial aid auditors to ensure compliance with Title IV, COA will limit their review under this standard to the following:
- 11.2.1 Examination of the most recent three years of financial aid audits, including any audit exceptions.
- 11.2.2 Default Rates for the Title IV Student Loan Program for the years since the last accreditation review, as reported to the college by the U. S. Department of Education.
- 11.2.2.a for institutions in which most recent rates are above the federal guidelines, plans to bring rates into compliance must be reported to the ABFSE office.
- 11.2.3 The most recent financial aid audit, the default rate info (as indicated in 11.2.1 and 11.2.2), and the most recent financial aid composite score will be attached to the Annual Report each year to be reviewed by a sub-committee of the COA.
- 11.3 Any adverse communications relative to Title IV eligibility must be reported to the ABFSE office in a timely manner (within 30 days of receipt).
- 11.3.1 Non-compliance with Title IV obligations will be considered in ABFSE accreditation decisions

STANDARD 12: PROGRAM LENGTH, CREDIT HOURS, TUITION, AND FEES

This standard applies to freestanding, single-purpose funeral service institutions for which ABFSE serves as the Title IV, HEA gatekeeper. An institution may request an exception if it holds recognition from another institutional accreditor.

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2 12.1 The institution must provide evidence of how credit hours are measured/calculated and how the program's
3 hours are distributed by term. This should be done for on campus as well as distance education, programs.
4 (See Appendix S)
5 12.2. The institution must demonstrate that the subject matter taught relates reasonably to tuition and fees
6 charged and to length of the program. Documentation must include length of program(s) and the number
7 of hours and the corresponding tuition and fees for each program