



**AMERICAN BOARD
of
FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION
and the
COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION**

**ACCREDITATION and POLICY
MANUAL**

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INTRODUCTION

The ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual (The Manual) provides the framework for institutions and programs, the funeral profession and the public to understand and evaluate the process of accreditation of funeral service education.

The Mission of ABFSE is to advance funeral service education and practice through high standards that prepare students for careers. The Manual includes the accreditation standards and the policies and procedures of ABFSE, including the Constitution and By-Laws.

The ABFSE Committee on Accreditation (COA) reviews The Manual on a continuous basis, making minor revisions and editorial changes as appropriate. Major revision dates are indicated in the footer of each page of The Manual.

Accreditation Standards undergo formal review every five (5) years as described in Chapter X, Section F. Procedures for Review of Standards are found in Appendix H. The most recent Review of Standards involved a 2-year process which began in 2017 and culminated in April 2019 approval with the revised standards taking effect January 1, 2020.

The Manual is available on-line and may be downloaded without charge from the ABFSE website www.abfse.org via the 'About' tab or the 'Accreditation' tab.

Questions about any aspect of The Manual and/or suggestions for correcting any errors identified in the text are welcomed.

NOTE: At present, the COA only accredits institutions and programs in the United States. However, the COA would consider applications for accreditation from institutions and programs in other countries. Accordingly, references to "state" throughout The Manual are properly viewed as inclusive of other appropriate governmental entities. Similarly, language throughout referring to degrees, semesters, terms, governance, etc., may be considered as implicitly including reasonable equivalencies as determined by the COA.

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ABFSE ACCREDITATION AND POLICY MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		i
CHAPTER I	THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION (ABFSE): BRIEF HISTORY	1-1
CHAPTER II	ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION AND BY-LAWS OF THE ABFSE	2-1
CHAPTER III	THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS	
	A. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION	3-1
	B. THE ABFSE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA)	3-1
	C. ELIGIBILITY FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION	3-2
	D. ACCREDITATION CATEGORIES	3-3
	E. DURATION OF ACCREDITATION	3-4
CHAPTER IV	CANDIDACY	
	A. CONSULTING VISIT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	4-1
	B. STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN APPLYING FOR CANDIDACY STATUS	4-1
	C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY STATUS	4-2
	D. WHEN PROGRAMS SEEK TO RE-INSTATE ACCREDITATION	4-3
	E. PUBLIC INFORMATION	4-3
CHAPTER V	ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES	
	A. APPLICATION	5-1
	B. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW (SELF STUDY)	5-1
	1. ORGANIZATION OF SELF STUDY	5-2
	2. SELF STUDY REPORT	5-2
	C. SITE VISIT	5-3
	1. SCHEDULE	5-3
	2. EXIT INTERVIEW	5-4
	D. SITE VISIT TEAM	5-4
	E. SITE VISIT TEAM REPORT	5-4
	F. RESPONSE TO THE TEAM REPORT	5-5
	G. COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA) DECISION	5-5
	H. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING ACCREDITATION	5-5
	1. PROGRAM DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES	5-5
	2. SITE VIST TEAM CHAIR REPSPONSIBILITIES	5-5
	3. SITE VISIT TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES	5-6
CHAPTER VI	COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA) PROCEDURES	
	A. COMMITTEE REVIEW OF MATERIALS AND PROGRAM TESTIMONY	6-1
	B. COMMITTEE (COA) ACTIONS	6-1
	C. PUBLICATION OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS	6-3
	D. WITHDRAWAL BY PROGRAM FROM ACCREDITATION PROCESS	6-4
	E. ADVERSE ACTION BY A STATE OR OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCY	6-4
	F. COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA) MEETING PROCEDURES	6-5

ABFSE ACCREDITATION AND POLICY MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS, cont'd

CHAPTER VII	APPELLATE PROCEDURE	
	A. COMPOSITION OF THE APPELLATE BOARD	7-1
	B. ELIGIBILITY FOR APPEAL	7-1
	C. FILING NOTICE OF APPEAL	7-1
	D. THE APPEALS PROCESS	7-2
	E. DECISION OF THE APPELLATE BOARD	7-3
	F. DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA)	7-4
CHAPTER VIII	MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION	
	A. ANNUAL RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE ABFSE	8-1
	B. PROGRESS REPORTS	8-1
	C. CONTINUATION OF ACCREDITATION	8-1
	D. CHANGES IN SPONSORSHIP	8-2
	E. NEW PROGRAM ADDITIONS IN ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS	8-3
	F. UNACCREDITABLE PROGRAMS IN ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS/ DEPARTMENTS	8-3
	G. COMPLAINTS ABOUT ACCREDITED PROGRAMS	8-3
	H. SPECIAL EVALUATIONS OR SITE VISITS TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH ABFSE STANDARDS	8-5
	I. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	8-6
	J. THIRD PARTY COMMENT	8-8
	K. NEW FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR REVIEW IN AN ADVERSE ACTION	8-9
CHAPTER IX	ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: PREAMBLE	9-1
	<i>(New Standards effective January 1, 2025)</i>	
	1. STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND ADMINISTRATION	9-2
	2. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES	9-3
	3. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS	9-4
	4. FINANCE	9-6
	5. CURRICULUM	9-6
	6. FACULTY	9-9
	7. FACILITIES	9-10
	8. LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCES	9-11
	9. STUDENTS	9-12
	10. PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT	9-13
	11. DEFAULT RATES IN STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM UNDER TITLE IV AND COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES	9-16
	12. PROGRAM LENGTH, TUITION, AND FEES RELATED TO SUBJECT MATTER	9-16
	13. PROGRAM LENGTH IN CREDIT HOURS	9-16
CHAPTER X	POLICIES	
	A. GENERAL POLICIES	10-1
	B. DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY	10-1
	C. CONFLICT OF INTEREST (see Appendix G)	10-1
	D. REFERENCE TO ACCREDITATION STATUS BY A PROGRAM	10-2
	E. PROTECTION OF STUDENTS	10-3
	F. REVISIONS OF ACCREDITATION MANUAL AND STANDARDS	10-3
	G. WAIVER AUTHORITY	10-3

ABFSE ACCREDITATION AND POLICY MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS, cont'd

H. PUBLICATION OF INACCURATE INFORMATION	10-3
I. BRANCH CAMPUS PROGRAMS	10-4
J. TEACH-OUT POLICIES	10-4
K. CONTINUITY OF ABFSE OPERATIONS	10-5
L. FILE MAINTENANCE BY ABFSE OFFICE	10-5
M. COLLECTION OF DEFAULT RATES	10-5
N. COMPLAINTS ABOUT COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA)	10-5
O. DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES	10-6
P. PROCESS FOR APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA) (also see Appendix B)	10-6
Q. CURRICULUM OUTLINES	10-7
R. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION	10-8
S. USE OF ABFSE LOGO	10-9
T. ABFSE BANKING/INVESTMENT POLICY	10-9
U. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ILLNESS AND DEATH POLICY	10-9
V. ABFSE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	10-9
W. TRAVEL DISRUPTION POLICY	10-10

APPENDICES

A. GLOSSARY	A-1
B. SAMPLE FORMS	
1. APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY STATUS	B-1
2. APPLICATION FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION	B-2
3. TRANSMITTAL FORM	B-3
4. PROGRAM AND INSTITUTION DATA FORM	B-4
5. ANNUAL REPORT FORM	B-5
6. CURRICULUM DISTRIBUTION BY ABFSE CONTENT AREA	B-6
7. PUBLIC MEMBER NOMINEE WORKSHEET	B-7
8. COA EDUCATOR MEMBER NOMINATION FORM	B-8
9. COMPLAINT ABOUT ABFSE ACCREDITED PROGRAM	B-9
10. FACULTY WITHOUT MASTERS	B-10
C. GUIDE FOR THE SELF STUDY PROCESS AND REPORT	
1. GUIDE for THE SELF STUDY PROCESS and REPORT	C-1
2. SAMPLE SITE VISIT AGENDA	C-4
D. FEE SCHEDULES FOR CANDIDACY, ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIP	D-1
E. DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES	E-1
VIRTUAL FOCUS VISIT GUIDELINES	
F. STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN TITLE IV, HEA PROGRAMS	F-1
G. CONFIDENTIALITY/CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT	G-1
H. FORMAL REVIEW OF STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION	H-1
I. ADVERTISING, STUDENT RECRUITMENT, AND REPRESENTATION	I-1
J. NBE FIRST-TIME TAKERS CONSIDERATIONS	J-1
K. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE APPLICATION	K-1
SCHEDULE OF FEES	K-14
L. DOCUMENT AND DESTRUCTION POLICY	L-1
M. CANDIDACY – Steps for Candidacy and sample timeline	M-1

CHAPTER I

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION

BRIEF HISTORY

The predecessor of the American Board of Funeral Service Education was established in 1946 as the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education (Joint Committee) by joint resolutions of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States (renamed the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards in 1998 - ICFSEB) and with the concurrence of the associations of school and colleges concerned with funeral service education.

The Joint Committee was composed of three representatives appointed by NFDA, three representatives appointed by The Conference, and three representatives of the schools and colleges.

The original constitution provided that the Joint Committee "shall make and enforce its rules and regulations governing its procedure and conduct, and [it] shall formulate and promulgate and enforce rules and regulations setting up standards concerning the schools and colleges teaching mortuary science."

The constitution also stated, "the power to accredit schools and colleges of mortuary science shall be vested in the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States, Inc.," with the further provision that "schools and colleges of mortuary science shall have the right of appeal from decisions of the accreditation committee of the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States, Inc. to the appellate board of the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education. Rules and procedures for the appellate board shall be promulgated by the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education."

In 1959, the name of the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education was changed to the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

In 1962, authority for accreditation of funeral service institutions/programs was transferred from the Conference to the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE). The ABFSE has continued that function and is currently the only accrediting agency in the United States in the field of funeral service education.

In keeping with the principle of accreditation by peers, the ABFSE amended its constitution and by-laws in 1970 to provide for the establishment of a Commission on Schools within the framework of a restructured American Board of Funeral Service Education.

The function of the Commission on Schools was described as:

1. to prepare for and certify to the American Board criteria and procedures for accreditation;
2. to receive reports of the Standards and Criteria committee and to certify to the American Board those schools that meet such criteria and are to be accredited; and
3. to establish, in cooperation with the American Board, appellate procedures on accreditation certifications of the Commission.

In 1978, in response to recommendations made by the U.S. Office of Education, an ad hoc committee of the American Board of Funeral Service Education was appointed for the purpose of restructuring the ABFSE in accordance with U.S. Office of Education recommendations. At that time, the Commission on Schools was changed to an autonomous and self-perpetuating standing committee of the Board and renamed the Committee on Accreditation (COA).

The American Board of Funeral Service Education has been recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education (formerly the U.S. Office of Education) as the accrediting agency in funeral service education since 1972 and the American Board was accepted into the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) in 1988 as a member of its Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies. In 1993, COPA became the Council on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation

(CORPA) which continued recognition of the ABFSE. Since 1997, ABFSE has been recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which replaced CORPA.

In 2022, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) renewed the recognition of the ABFSE Committee on Accreditation (COA) for a seven (7) year period. ABFSE submitted interim reports to CHEA in 2015 and 2018 and again in 2019-20 as CHEA transitioned to a seven (7) year recognition cycle.

The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) makes recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education regarding recognition of accreditors. In June 2008, NACIQI recommended that the US Secretary of Education grant continued recognition to ABFSE for the full period of five (5) years. After several delays due to changes at The Department of Education, ABFSE recognition was re-affirmed in 2012.

During 2015, ABFSE completed the re-recognition petition for the U. S. Department of Education and appeared before NACIQI once again. Five (5) year recognition renewal was granted by the US Secretary of Education. The next recognition renewal is expected to commence in 2023.

In 1987, the curriculum of the American Board of Funeral Service Education underwent a complete review and a new policy on annual reviews was implemented to ensure that each curriculum outline is updated at least every five (5) years. In 1988 and again in 1995, The Manual on Accreditation was extensively rewritten and updated to incorporate many necessary policy changes as recommended by USDE, CHEA, and ABFSE members. Additional revisions and editorial changes have occurred on an annual basis since then.

In 1995, all Standards of Accreditation were reviewed and updated by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and provisions were instituted for future reviews every five (5) years.

In 1995, ABFSE membership included forty-two (42) accredited college and university programs in Funeral Service Education and Mortuary Science, with four (4) additional programs in the process of applying for accreditation. In 2023, there were fifty-eight (58) accredited programs.

In April 2002, the American Board of Funeral Service Education approved a new Constitution and By-Laws which, included provisions for membership of additional funeral service organizations. The National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association (NFDMA) was admitted to full ABFSE membership in September 2002. In 2009, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) also became a member. Cremation Association of North America (CANA) was approved for membership in 2017 and ICCFA withdrew from membership in May 2018.

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) expanded its voting membership when it welcomed a representative from the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association in April 2005. In 2012, ICCFA and the College and University Council were added to the voting membership of the COA. ICCFA withdrew from membership in May 2018. Voting members of COA currently total eleven (11): seven (7) educators, two (2) industry representatives and two (2) public members. A CANA representative joined the COA in 2020.

Institutions accredited by ABFSE must offer a program at the associate degree level or higher, or its equivalent (i.e., 60 semester credits of a prescribed curriculum) and meet the required standards of the ABFSE. The ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual is available on-line and may be downloaded without charge from the ABFSE website www.abfse.org via the 'About' tab or the 'Accreditation' tab. Revised accreditation standards take effect January 1, 2020.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments concerning the qualifications for accreditation or candidacy of any listed program. Comments received will be considered by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) as part of its regular program review.

CHAPTER II
AMENDED AND RESTATED
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, INC.

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of the corporation is American Board of Funeral Service Education, Inc. (the “Corporation”).

ARTICLE II
MEMBERS

The Corporation has such members with the rights and obligations as set forth in the Corporation’s Bylaws.

ARTICLE III
REGISTERED OFFICE AND AGENT

The Corporation’s registered agent in the District of Columbia is:

Name	Address
CT Corporation System	1015 15 th St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20025

ARTICLE IV
PURPOSES

- A. The Corporation is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under D.C. Code, Title 29, Chapter 4 (the “Act”).
- B. The Corporation is incorporated and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501I(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”) (all references to the Code include the corresponding provision of any subsequent federal tax law). In particular, the purpose of the Corporation is to further education in the field of funeral service and other related fields, to formulate standards of funeral service education, to grant accreditation to qualified programs and institutions of funeral service education, and to do all things incidental to the foregoing. In furtherance of these purposes, the Corporation has all powers granted to a corporation under the Act.
- C. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation may inure to the benefit of or be distributed to any member, director, employee, or other individual, partnership, estate, trust, corporation, or unincorporated association having a personal or private interest in the Corporation. Compensation for services actually rendered and reimbursement for expenses actually incurred in attending to the affairs of the Corporation must be limited to reasonable amounts. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation may be devoted to the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation in a manner or to an extent that would disqualify the Corporation for tax exemption under section 501I(3) of the Code. The Corporation shall not “participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office” within the meaning of section 501I(3) of the Code.
- D. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on by:
- (1) a corporation exempt from federal income tax as an organization described in section 501I(3) of the Code; or
 - (2) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170I(2) of the Code.

1 **ARTICLE V.**
2 **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
3

4 Except as provided herein or in the Bylaws of the Corporation, the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be
5 managed by or under the direction, and subject to the oversight, of a board of directors. The qualifications, manner of
6 election, number, tenure, powers, and duties of the directors of the Corporation are as set out in the Bylaws of the
7 Corporation.
8

9 **ARTICLE VI.**
10 **DESIGNATED BODY**
11

12 The Corporation's Committee on Accreditation shall be a "designated body" under the Act, with exclusive authority
13 over actions of the Corporation in relation to accreditation of funeral service education programs, including the
14 approval and revision of standards, granting of candidacy, awarding or denying accreditation, and all other actions
15 related to an applicant's accreditation status with the exception of appellate review. The qualifications, manner of
16 election, number, tenure, powers and duties of members of the Committee on Accreditation are as set out in the
17 Bylaws of the Corporation.
18

19 **ARTICLE VII.**
20 **AMENDMENTS**
21

22 These Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of the Corporation may be amended as provided in the Bylaws.
23

24 **ARTICLE VIII.**
25 **DISSOLUTION**
26

27 In the event of the dissolution or final liquidation of the Corporation:

- 28 A. None of the property of the Corporation nor any proceeds thereof shall be distributed to or divided among
29 any of the members, directors or officers of the Corporation or inure to the benefit of any individual.
30 B. After all liabilities and obligations of the Corporation have been paid, satisfied and discharged, or adequate
31 provision made, all remaining property and assets of the Corporation shall be distributed in such manner as
32 the Board of Directors, in the exercise of its discretion, may by majority vote determine; provided, however,
33 that such transfers of property and assets shall be to one or more organizations which are exempt from
34 federal income tax as organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Code.
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**BY-LAWS OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION (AMENDED AND
RESTATED)**

**ARTICLE I
PURPOSE**

The purpose of American Board of Funeral Service Education, Inc. ("ABFSE") is to further education in the field of funeral service/mortuary science and other related fields, to formulate standards of funeral service education, to grant accreditation to qualified programs and institutions of funeral service education, and to do all things incidental to the foregoing. ABFSE shall accredit institutions and programs of funeral service education in accordance with regulations and procedures as set forth in its Accreditation and Policy Manual.

**ARTICLE II
MEMBERSHIP**

ABFSE has two classes of members for purposes of the D.C. Nonprofit Corporation Act of 2010 (the "Act"): (i) educational institution members (each, a "Program Member") and (ii) funeral association members (each, an "Association Member") with the rights and obligations further described below.

A. Program Members

1. Criteria for Membership. An educational institution is a member in ABFSE if it:
 - a. offers a degree program accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of ABFSE;
 - b. meets the requirements for accreditation as stated in the ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual; and
 - c. has paid the fees required for initial or annual renewal of accreditation, as applicable.
2. Voting; Representatives. Each Program Member is entitled to designate one (1) representative, who shall be the person overseeing such Program Member's funeral service/mortuary science program or their direct designee, to attend each meeting of the ABFSE membership. Such representative, if present at the meeting, is entitled to one (1) vote on matters before the ABFSE membership; provided, however, that at no time shall Program Members' representatives be entitled to less than the majority of the total votes cast.

B. Association Members

1. Criteria for Membership. A funeral service association is a member in ABFSE if it:
 - a. is national in scope;
 - b. is non-profit;
 - c. has membership consisting of funeral service licensees or regulators of those licensees;
 - d. has a direct interest in funeral service education; and
 - e. commits to a renewable three-year membership and is current on applicable dues.
2. Voting. Each Association Member is entitled to appoint one (1) representative to (i) attend meetings of the ABFSE membership and (ii) represent the Association Member as a member of the ABFSE Executive Committee. Such representative, if present at a meeting, is entitled to one (1) vote on matters before the ABFSE membership or Executive Committee, as applicable.
3. Term of Representative. Each appointment of a representative by an Association Member shall be made for a term of three (3) years to correspond with the membership term of such Association Member and such representative shall be eligible for reappointment for one additional three (3) year term. Terms shall run from the conclusion of the ABFSE annual meeting. Each representative, however, shall be subject to recall by the appointing Association Member, in which event the successor, when appointed, shall complete the unexpired term.
4. Executive Participation. In addition to the voting representatives, an executive officer of each Association Member, or such person's designee, may attend and participate in the meetings of the ABFSE membership, but are not entitled to vote.

1 5. COA Representation. Each Association Member that maintains ABFSE membership in good standing
2 for a period of at least three (3) consecutive years, shall be entitled to have representation on the Committee on
3 Accreditation as detailed further and subject to the limitations described in Article VI below.

4 5 **C. Procedures**

6 1. Notice of Designations or Appointments. Notice of all designations and appointments of representatives
7 to the ABFSE shall be made in writing by the relevant Association Member or Program Member, ideally at least 30
8 days but no fewer than 24 hours, prior to the meeting for which the designation or appointment is to become effective.

9
10 2. Alternates. Each Association Member and Program Member shall have the right to name an alternate
11 representative to the ABFSE who may serve for a specific membership meeting with voting privileges when its regular
12 representative is unable to attend, provided, however, that official notification of such substitute shall be made in writing
13 (at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting) by the Program Member or Association Member concerned. In the case
14 of Program Members, any alternate must be directly involved with the relevant Program Member's funeral
15 service/mortuary science program. The right to name an alternate shall not apply to representatives when serving as
16 members of the Executive Committee.

17
18 3. Compensation. Representatives of Association Members and Program Members shall not be
19 compensated by the ABFSE for their service as member representatives. All travel and other expenses of representatives
20 shall be paid by the Association Member or Program Member that designated or appointed them.

21
22 4. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the ABFSE membership shall be held between April 1 and
23 May 15 of each year unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee with at least ninety (90) days' notice,
24 which may be given in a written, electronic, or commonly accepted manner to the membership. Special meetings shall
25 be called when deemed necessary by a majority of the ABFSE membership or by the Executive Committee.

26
27 5. Quorum and Action. A majority (51%) of designated representatives of the ABFSE membership who are
28 entitled to cast a vote at any meeting shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum exists, action on a matter is approved if
29 the votes cast favoring the action exceed the votes cast opposing the action or, in the case of the election of officers,
30 based on which candidate receives the most votes.

31
32 6. Remote Meetings. An annual, regular, or special meeting of the membership does not need to be held at
33 a geographic location if the meeting is held by means of the Internet or other electronic communications technology in
34 a fashion pursuant to which the members have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently
35 with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the members, pose questions, and make comments.

36
37 7. Termination of Membership. Any Program Member or Association Member who ceases to meet the
38 applicable eligibility criteria outlined above, including failure to pay applicable membership dues or accreditation fees,
39 or, in the case of a Program Member, loss or withdrawal of accreditation, shall cease to be a member of ABFSE upon a
40 final determination by the Executive Committee that such organization no longer qualifies for ABFSE membership. All
41 rights of membership, including to the right to have representatives on the Executive Committee, Committee on
42 Accreditation or any other body of the ABFSE shall cease immediately upon termination. An individual serving as an
43 officer or member of the Executive Committee of ABFSE as a representative of a terminated member shall be deemed
44 to have resigned such office effective as of the date of the member's termination.

45 46 47 **ARTICLE III** 48 **DUES AND FEES**

49
50 The members shall financially support the ABFSE through annual payments. The amount of annual dues for
51 Association Members shall be established by the Executive Committee every three (3) years. Program Members shall
52 be required to pay fees associated with annual renewal of accreditation and other fees for accredited institutions as
53 established by the Committee on Accreditation prior to the annual meeting.

**ARTICLE IV
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

A. Board of Directors

The board of directors of the ABFSE, for purposes of the Act, shall be referred to as its Executive Committee. Except as provided in the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation and Article VI of these Bylaws, the activities and affairs of ABFSE shall be managed by or under the direction, and subject to the oversight, of the Executive Committee.

B. Composition

1. In General. Subject to paragraph 2 immediately below, there shall be seven (7) voting members of the Executive Committee, composed as follows: the President, the Immediate Past President, the Vice President, the Secretary-Treasurer, and one (1) representative from each Association Member, in accordance with Article II.B of these Bylaws. The ABFSE Executive Director shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Executive Committee. The chairs of the advisory committees and all Past Presidents shall be entitled to attend and participate in Executive Committee meetings but shall not make motions or be entitled to vote.

2. Additional Members. To ensure that representatives of Program Members continue to be in the majority on the Executive Committee, additional voting members will automatically be added to the Executive Committee any time the number of Association Member representatives equal or exceed fifty percent (50%) of the Executive Committee. The new voting members shall be added in the following order: College and University Council Chair, College and University Council Secretary, and additional College and University Council representatives as elected by that group.

C. Meetings

Executive Committee meetings shall be held as necessary. The Executive Committee shall be required to report its actions at the next meeting of the ABFSE membership.

D. Notice

Written notices of all Executive Committee meetings shall be transmitted by mail or electronically to each of the members of the Executive Committee at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the date of such meetings.

E. Quorum and Action

A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of the Executive Committee members in office before a meeting begins. If a quorum is present when a vote is taken, the affirmative vote of a majority of Executive Committee members present shall be the act of the Executive Committee unless a greater vote is required by the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE V
OFFICERS**

A. Officers

The officers shall be selected from representatives of Program Members who meet the candidate credentials set forth below and they shall be elected by secret ballot at the annual meeting of the ABFSE. If there is only one (1) nominee for an office, the election may be by voice vote or show of hands.

B. Term and Term Limit

Officers of the ABFSE shall hold office for a term of two (2) years or until their successors are elected. No elected officer of the ABFSE shall be represented in a given office for more than two (2) terms in succession.

C. Qualifications

Candidate credentials for the officers of the ABFSE (i.e., President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Immediate Past President) shall be at least: 1) a full-time faculty or administrator at an ABFSE accredited institution or program; 2) a current or past member of an advisory committee of the ABFSE; and 3) have attended ABFSE annual meetings for at least three (3) of the previous five (5) years.

D. President

The President shall preside at all meetings of the ABFSE membership and Executive Committee and perform the customary duties of the office. The President shall approve along with the Secretary-Treasurer, all written contracts approved by the ABFSE membership or Executive Committee.

E. Vice-President

The Vice-President, in the absence of the President, shall have the powers and shall perform the duties of the President.

F. Secretary-Treasurer

The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible for preparing or supervising the preparation of the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee and the membership and for maintaining and authenticating the records of the ABFSE required to be kept under the Act. On behalf of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Executive Director shall send out notices of meetings, conduct correspondence and perform such other duties as may be assigned to the office.

G. Staff

1. Generally. The ABFSE may retain the services of such persons as it may deem necessary, who shall perform such duties as designated by the ABFSE.

2. Executive Director. The Executive Director is the paid, full-time administrator of the ABFSE. The Executive Director serves as non-voting staff to all committees and is responsible for carrying out all administrative and clerical functions required by the ABFSE and its committees. The Committee on Accreditation (COA) along with minority participation of ABFSE officers are responsible for the hiring and appointment of the Executive Director, with each member of the COA having one (1) vote and each ABFSE officer having one (1) vote. At no time shall the ABFSE officers have more votes than the total combined votes of the members of the COA. The Executive Director is evaluated annually as stipulated in Chapter X, Section R of the Accreditation and Policy Manual and serves on a re-appointable, annual basis with remuneration, vacation and other personnel benefits as approved by the COA and the ABFSE officers. The COA shall report on any actions regarding the Executive Director at the ABFSE annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

A. Composition

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) shall consist of twelve (12) voting members, including:

1. Two (2) public members, neither of whom may be:
 - a. An employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited or pre-accredited by the COA or has applied for accreditation or Candidacy;
 - b. A member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the COA or ABFSE; or
 - c. A spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph "a" or "b" of this definition;
2. One (1) representative each from the Association Members (subject to Article II.B.5.);

3. Three (3) representatives from the single-purpose Program Members;
4. Three (3) representatives from the multi-purpose Program Members; and
5. One (1) educator representing the College and University Council.

The chairs of site visit teams are ex-officio non-voting members of the COA. The chairs may participate in discussion but may not make motions and are not entitled to vote. No officer of ABFSE shall be a member of the COA and ABFSE officers are not entitled to the written reports to, or from, the COA.

At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting members of the COA must demonstrate significant experience in Distance Education at the supervisory, developmental, or practitioner level. Such twenty-five percent (25%), shall include at least one educator and one public member.

B. Election and Term

1. Public Members. The public members of the COA are to be elected, from nominations in response to a public call, for a term of one (1) year by the COA and may be eligible for reappointment up to a maximum period of six (6) years of service.

2. Other COA Members. With the exception of the public members, the members of the COA shall serve for a term of three (3) years, exclusive of original appointments, which shall be staggered in such a way as to provide for orderly transition. Members shall be eligible for reappointment for only one (1) additional consecutive three-year period. Members are elected by the COA, in accordance with the composition criteria noted above. The COA will announce vacancies on the COA as they occur and will solicit nominations for individuals to fill the vacancies from the appropriate constituencies as prescribed in the Accreditation and Policy Manual, Chapter X, Policies, Section P. The COA will elect new members only from nominations received.

C. Quorum and Voting

Presence of a majority of the COA's entire membership shall be considered a quorum for the conduct of business and majority vote of those present at a meeting shall be the action of the COA.

D. Function and Authority

As provided in the ABFSE Articles of Incorporation, the COA is a designated body that has exclusive authority over actions of ABFSE in relation to accreditation of funeral service education programs. The function of the COA shall be to approve and revise accreditation standards and to grant candidacy, initial accreditation, or reaccreditation to institutions and/or programs of funeral service education. For the avoidance of doubt, neither ABFSE membership nor the ABFSE Executive Committee shall have any role or involvement with respect to the COA accreditation process, establishing its standards and procedures, or with respect to its decision-making.

1. The COA possesses the sole authority to grant candidacy, initial accreditation or reaccreditation to institutions and/or programs of funeral service education by virtue of the authority set forth in the ABFSE Articles of Incorporation and the recognition awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. An institution or program of funeral service education adversely affected by adverse decisions of the COA may avail itself of the COA's appellate procedure as set forth in its Accreditation and Policy Manual. The COA appellate board shall be appointed by the COA and shall not include any member of the ABFSE Executive Committee.
 - a. The COA shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson who shall serve as chairperson in the event the chairperson is absent or unable to serve. The Executive Director shall serve as secretary for the COA.
 - b. The COA shall appoint educators from disciplines other than funeral service education to serve as chairs of the site visit teams. Appointments shall be for a period of three (3) years, renewable. The chairs shall serve as ex-officio members of the COA.

3. The COA shall create and establish its own budget annually and provide it to the ABFSE for inclusion in the overall budget. The COA shall be autonomous in its expenditures and revenues. COA shall collect its own dues and fees, and its funds shall be maintained in accounts separate from those of the ABFSE.
4. The COA shall meet regularly at least twice each year, in the fall and in the spring. The COA may also choose to hold special meetings either in person, by conference call, or by video call when dealing with issues deemed too timely to wait.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

A. Board Committees

The Executive Committee may create one or more subcommittees of the Executive Committee that consists of one or more members of the Executive Committee.

B. Advisory Committees

The advisory committees of the ABFSE shall be: Scholarship Committee, Curriculum Committee, Accreditation Liaison Committee, College and University Council, Program Committee, Bylaws Committee, and National Board Examination Liaison Committee.

C. Advisory Committee Membership

1. Qualifications. Membership on advisory committees is open to the following: full-time or part-time educator or administrator from an accredited program or institution; Association members. Unless otherwise stated in a committee description, the majority of voting members must be educators from accredited programs or institutions.
2. Term and Appointment. The members of all advisory committees, except the Accreditation Liaison Committee, shall serve for a term of three (3) years, exclusive of original appointments, which shall be staggered in such a way as to provide for orderly transition. Members shall be eligible for reappointment for only one (1) additional consecutive three (3) year term. Members originally appointed to complete an unexpired term are eligible for reappointment to one (1) consecutive term. Members are appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee. The President shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of all committees, except the COA. In making committee appointments, the President shall strive for a balance in representation of the different types of educational institutions.
3. Committee Leadership. The members of each advisory committee shall elect a chair and a vice chair at their spring meeting to serve for the ensuing year. The President of the ABFSE shall announce vacancies on the committees as they occur and will solicit nominations for individuals to fill the vacancies from the appropriate constituencies.
 - a. Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members with educators comprising the majority of the membership but with a representative from each Association Member.
 - b. National Board Examination Liaison Committee. The National Board Examination Liaison Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members with educators comprising the majority of the membership but with a representative from each Association Member.
 - c. Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members with educators comprising the majority of the membership but with a representative from each Association Member.

- d. Program Committee. The Program Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members with educators comprising the majority of the membership but with a representative from each Association Member. This Committee shall assist with planning for the annual meeting and other programs and workshops.
- e. Bylaws Committee. The Bylaws Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members with educators comprising the majority of the membership but with a representative from each Association Member. This Committee shall periodically review the Bylaws and respond to requests for review.
- f. Accreditation Liaison Committee. The Accreditation Liaison Committee shall consist of the officers of ABFSE and three (3) voting representatives of Program Members appointed by the President, who do not currently serve on the Committee on Accreditation. The appointed members of the committee shall serve at the discretion of the President for a one (1) year term. At least one (1) member of the Accreditation Liaison Committee shall represent a single-purpose institution and one (1) member shall represent a public institution. An appointed member shall not serve more than two consecutive terms (2 years).

The purpose of the Accreditation Liaison Committee is to foster and enhance communication between the ABFSE membership, the elected officers, and the members of the Committee on Accreditation. The Accreditation Liaison Committee members shall not serve as voting or ex-officio members on the COA and shall not be considered members of the COA. The Accreditation Liaison Committee shall have no role in establishing the standards or policies of the COA, nor shall it be involved in the decision-making of the COA.

The COA shall allow adequate time on meeting agendas to review the recommendations of the Accreditation Liaison Committee. The Accreditation Liaison Committee shall not be present during regular COA deliberations.

D. College and University Council

The College and University Council shall serve as the caucus for all Program Members and shall consist of the representatives from each Program Member, as determined under Article II.A above, with each Program Member representative having one (1) vote. The College and University Council shall meet at least at each annual meeting and shall elect its own officers. Minutes from the meetings will be included as a portion of the official minutes of the ABFSE annual meeting.

The Council shall perform the following assigned responsibilities:

1. Review all notices of motion prior to each annual meeting of the ABFSE and recommend action to be taken on each.
2. Raise for discussion and recommendation to the ABFSE such issues related to the policies and procedures of the ABFSE and any of its committees deemed appropriate, so long as actual ABFSE vote on new policies follows the requirement of at least thirty (30) days' notice prior to formal ABFSE action.
3. Establish a Nominating Committee to present a slate of names to the membership at the ABFSE annual meeting for each officer position that is available. Candidates for office will be presented by the Nominating Committee of the College and University Council or they may be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting.

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**ARTICLE VIII
INDEMNIFICATION**

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A. Any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed cause of action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, administrative, or investigative (other than a suit by or in the right of the ABFSE) by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the ABFSE or a member of the COA or is or was serving at the request of the ABFSE as a trustee, officer, director, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, shall be indemnified by the ABFSE for expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with such cause of action, suit or proceeding if he/she acted in good faith and in a manner he/she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the ABFSE, and, with respect to any such action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his/her conduct was unlawful.

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B. However, no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue, or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for personal misconduct or intentionally wrongful activity, or any activity outside the scope of his/her duties performed for the ABFSE. Nor shall any damages be paid for negligence or exemplary damages.

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C. Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding may be paid by the ABFSE in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding as authorized by the Executive Committee in a specific case upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the trustee, director, officer, employee, or agent to repay such amount, unless it shall ultimately be determined that he/she is entitled to be indemnified by the ABFSE as authorized in this Article VIII.

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D. The ABFSE may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the ABFSE or a member of the COA, or is or was serving at the request of the ABFSE in any such capacity.

**ARTICLE IX
RULES OF ORDER**

When not inconsistent with these Bylaws, the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall govern deliberation of the ABFSE membership, the Executive Committee and the COA.

**ARTICLE X
FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of ABFSE shall be from October 1 to September 30.

**ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENT**

The ABFSE Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws may be altered, repealed or amended at any regular or special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided written notice of such changes has been transmitted by mail or electronically to all members at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of such meeting.

CHAPTER III

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

A. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a process through which a program or institution voluntarily submits to evaluation by its peers against an established set of standards. The American Board of Funeral Service Education, through its Committee on Accreditation, is charged with the responsibility for implementing a process to achieve the following purposes:

1. develop, approve and improve the standards of funeral service education and thereby protect the public interest;
2. describe the characteristics of an accredited institution of funeral service education;
3. assist each institution in upgrading its own standards through a continuing system of self study, visitation, evaluation and consultation;
4. provide a dependable basis for prospective students' evaluation and selection of an institution offering funeral service education;
5. provide an opportunity for interinstitutional relationships; and
6. provide a list of accredited institutions to the public and to all agencies interested in funeral service.

The accreditation process has three (3) major components:

1. *Self study* conducted carefully and thoroughly by the institution. The results are summarized in the Self study Report and submitted to the Committee on Accreditation.
2. *Site Visit* conducted by a site visit team selected by the Committee on Accreditation. The site visit team prepares a Site Visit Evaluation Report which is submitted to the Committee on Accreditation and reviewed by the program.
3. *Committee on Accreditation Action* which is based upon a thorough review of all documentation, including the program's formal responses to the Site Visit Team Report.

Each of the above components is discussed in detail in Chapter V (Accreditation Procedures) of this manual.

B. THE ABFSE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA)

The COA is a standing committee of the American Board of Funeral Service Education. It functions autonomously and independently of the Board. The COA has the sole authority to approve and revise standards, grant candidacy, award or deny accreditation, and take all other actions related to an applicant's accreditation status except Appellate Review.

The COA consists of up to twelve (12) members elected by the Committee, including two (2) public members. (See membership in Article VI A of the By-Laws and Appendix B-7 and B-8.)

Representative of the public means a person who is not –

- a) An employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited or preaccredited by the COA or has applied for accreditation or preaccreditation;

- b) A member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the COA or ABFSE; or
- c) A spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph 'a' or 'b' of this definition.

In addition, membership includes one (1) representative from each affiliated organization, three (3) representatives of the private institutions of funeral service education, and three (3) representatives of the public institutions of funeral service education.

At least twenty-five percent (25%) (of which includes one educator and one public member) of the voting members of the COA must demonstrate significant experience in Distance Learning at the supervisory, developmental, or practitioner level.

The COA appoints educators from disciplines other than funeral service education to serve as Chairpersons of site visit teams. The COA and its staff are responsible for selecting site visit team members in accordance with Chapter V of this manual.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION BY THE ABFSE

To be eligible for accreditation by the ABFSE, the applicant must:

1. offer a program of at least sixty (60) semester or ninety (90) quarter credit hours leading to a degree or diploma in funeral service education;
2. have a license or charter from the appropriate governmental agency to operate and award a degree or diploma;
3. submit a feasibility study which includes all documentation and information required by the COA of the ABFSE;
4. meet or exceed the published accreditation Standards of the ABFSE;
5. have achieved Candidacy Status (Chapter IV, Candidacy Status);
6. institutions/programs in candidacy status must have at least one (1) class of students taking the second half of the program and enrolled in clinical embalming. Students are not eligible to take the NBE until the program achieves accreditation;
7. have a governing board which shall exercise all powers that may be performed by the institution under the license or charter above; and
8. have a chief executive officer directly accountable to the governing board.
9. ensure that its program director has attended the Self study Workshop (workshops are offered twice a year).
10. After completion of the Candidacy Phase:
 - a. the CEO of the institution makes a formal request to initiate the accreditation process;
 - b. an application for initial accreditation is submitted;
 - c. the program conducts a Self study; a site-visit is scheduled;
 - d. a Self study report and other required documentation is submitted;
 - e. a site visit is conducted;

- f. a written report is submitted by the site visit team;
- g. the program is invited to respond in writing to the site visit evaluation report;
- h. the COA considers all documentation and oral testimony;
- i. the institution is notified of the COA action; and
- j. the COA publishes the accreditation status of the program.

11. Effective Date of Accreditation

For institutions or programs that achieve initial accreditation, the effective date of that accreditation is the date initial candidacy was awarded by the COA. Students who complete all coursework after the date candidacy is awarded, but before initial accreditation is achieved, will be permitted, after initial accreditation is awarded, to take the NBE and with all requirements completed, be considered graduates from an ABFSE accredited program.

12. Initial Accreditation.

D. ACCREDITATION CATEGORIES

Actions taken by the COA may result in one (1) of the following:

1. Pre-accreditation Categories

Candidacy. Awarded to new programs which, in the judgment of the COA, demonstrate the potential to meet the standards for accreditation.

Candidacy Withdrawn. Given to a program in Candidacy Status, which in the judgment of the COA, has failed to correct deficiencies as advised by the COA.

Candidacy Withheld. Given to a program which fails to demonstrate the potential to meet the standards for accreditation or fulfill the Candidacy eligibility requirements.

2. Accreditation Categories

a. Awarding Accreditation

(1) *Accreditation.* Initial or reaccreditation may be granted when the accreditation or review process confirms that the program is in compliance with all standards, with or without meeting specified stipulations.

(2) *Probation.* Probation is imposed when the program is not in compliance with the Standards and the deficiencies are so serious that the capability of the program to provide acceptable educational experiences for the students appears to be threatened. Most assignments of probation are based on evidence substantiated by a site visit. However, if the cited deficiencies are not in dispute, the COA may impose Probation without conducting a site visit.

(3) *Administrative Probation* is awarded by the ABFSE Executive Director for a maximum of ninety (90) days when an institution or program is not in compliance with one or more of the following requirements for maintenance of accreditation:

- Program Director turnover. The change of program director requires notification of the ABFSE office via the Substantive Change process (Appendix K). Administrative Probation applies when an interim program director does not possess the qualifications described in Standard 1.8.

Failure to:

- Pay accreditation-related fees and charges within sixty (60) days of the invoice date;
- Submit reports or other required information by the due date;
- Agree to a reasonable site visit date at or near the time established by the ABFSE Executive Director;
- Advertise its programs ethically and accurately according to ABFSE policies (see Chapter X, Section D).

Administrative Probation is an accreditation category and is not subject to appeal. Although the institution or program is recognized and listed as accredited during the period of administrative probation, failure to completely remedy the situation by the date specified in the probationary letter may result in Involuntary Withdrawal of Accreditation as described under Section D (2)(b) of Chapter III.

Complete resolution of the situation cited in the administrative probation letter, along with payment of the appropriate fee (see the fee schedule in Appendix D), will satisfy the administrative requirements and result in restoration of accredited status.

- (4) *Show Cause*. If the conditions which led to the probation are not removed within the stated time, the program will lose its accreditation unless it can show good cause why accreditation should not be immediately removed.

The COA shall notify the program in advance (at least six months) that it must show good cause why accreditation should not be withdrawn.

While under Show Cause, the program may be granted a time frame similar to Probation in order to demonstrate that it is in full compliance with the Standards. During this time the program will be subject to special scrutiny by the COA, including a requirement to submit prescribed reports and possible special visit(s) by representatives of the COA. The costs of special visits are borne by the institution.

A Show Cause order does not alter the candidacy or accredited status of the program.

b. Denying Accreditation

(1) *Accreditation Withdrawn*

Accreditation Withdrawn – Voluntary (at request of sponsoring institution)

Accreditation Withdrawn – Involuntary (for failure to be in substantial compliance with the Standards or with administrative requirements.

The appropriate official is provided with a clear statement of each deficiency and is informed that the sponsoring institution may apply for accreditation as a new applicant whenever the program is believed to be in compliance with the Standards and with administrative requirements for maintaining accreditation.

The letter notifying the appropriate officials that the program has received Accreditation Withdrawn – Involuntary indicates that the institution may appeal the decision. (A copy of the Appeals Procedures for Accreditation Withdrawn is enclosed with the letter.)

- (2) *Accreditation Withheld*. A program seeking Initial Accreditation may have Accreditation Withheld if the accreditation review process confirms that the program is not in compliance with Standards that are vital to the educational program.

The appropriate official is provided with a clear statement of each deficiency and is informed that application for accreditation as a new applicant may be made whenever the program is believed to be in compliance with the Standards.

E. DURATION OF ACCREDITATION ACTIONS

The maximum duration of *Accreditation* is seven (7) years. Shorter durations may be awarded by the COA based upon the extent to which the program has deficiencies to be addressed. Maintenance of accreditation

throughout this period is contingent upon the submission of satisfactory annual reports and compliance with any stipulations issued.

In all cases of initial accreditation (i.e., moving from candidacy to accreditation), the initial duration of accreditation will be no longer than three (3) years.

Probation is ordinarily granted for one (1) year, during which time the program is expected to correct deficiencies.

Candidacy Status is granted for a period of one (1) year and may, at the discretion of the COA, be extended one (1) additional year.

Programs whose Candidacy or Accreditation has been *Withheld* or *Withdrawn* must wait for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of such action before reapplying for Candidacy or Accreditation. An institution that has had its accreditation withdrawn either by formal COA action or which has relinquished it voluntarily will not be bound by the provisions of Section C.6 of Chapter III provided it submits a formal letter within two (2) years of the loss indicating its intent to apply for candidacy status. All other provisions applying to new programs - including the provision for a visit by the ABFSE Executive Director - apply.

CHAPTER IV

CANDIDACY

Candidacy for accreditation is a pre-accreditation status. It is not accreditation. Programs seeking accreditation must first meet the criteria for Candidacy. In addition, the Candidacy application measures the program's potential to meet the Standards for Accreditation, although the achievement of Candidacy does not insure eventual accreditation.

There are two (2) circumstances under which a program might be seeking candidacy:

1. program has never been accredited, and is applying for Candidacy as a first step in this process;
2. program was previously accredited but voluntarily surrendered accreditation or had its accreditation withdrawn.

The Candidate program must submit a detailed document or feasibility study that demonstrates that it meets the Candidacy requirements, has effectively organized resources to enable it to accomplish its educational purpose, and is following realistic plans to acquire, organize, and apply additional resources needed to comply with the Standards for Accreditation. This feasibility study becomes the Candidacy Self study. The institution or program is responsible to the Committee on Accreditation for any questions the committee might have regarding the document. The document should specifically address these eligibility requirements and should include extensive explanation and examples.

A. CONSULTING VISIT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. A program planning to apply for Candidacy is required to have a consulting visit by the ABFSE Executive Director normally accompanied by a representative of the Committee on Accreditation (COA). This visit is to review the status of the program, including its ability to meet ABFSE Candidacy Requirements, ABFSE Standards of Accreditation as well as to provide general application process assistance.
2. The program is to contact the Executive Director to arrange a mutually convenient time for this campus visit. Costs of the visit are paid by the program. Costs of the visit will be travel and related expenses for the individuals who are making the visit. There is no direct compensation for the ABFSE Executive Director. The second individual will be compensated according to the list of fees in Appendix D.

B. STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN APPLYING FOR CANDIDACY STATUS (SEE APPENDIX M)

1. The program must contact the ABFSE Executive Director to arrange the required visit.
2. The program must download the Application for Candidacy from the ABFSE website (www.abfse.org, Appendix B-1).
3. The program must submit the Application for Candidacy, the Candidacy Feasibility study (Self study) document, and the required application fee to the ABFSE office not less than sixty (60) days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee on Accreditation.
4. Upon approval of the Candidacy Feasibility study, the program will be assigned a three (3) person site visit team consisting of a Team Chair, a funeral service practitioner, and a funeral service educator. Costs (expenses and stipends) for the visit are paid by the program or institution.
5. The Application for Candidacy, the Candidacy Feasibility study document (Self study), and all supporting materials will be reviewed by the Committee on Accreditation at one of its two regular meetings each year and a decision rendered.

6. If Candidacy status is granted by the Committee on Accreditation, the period of candidacy shall be for one (1) year. Candidacy can be renewed for one (1) additional year only. The published renewal fee will be assessed.

Initial Accreditation typically follows Candidacy.

NOTE: See Appendix D for schedule of fees.

C. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY STATUS

To be considered for Candidacy, a program or its sponsoring institution

1. Must have a license or charter from the appropriate state governmental agency to operate and award a minimum of an Associate Degree or equivalent.
2. Must submit documentation that the program has officially notified the appropriate state funeral service licensing agency and the appropriate state education agency of its intent to offer a program in funeral service education.
3. Must define its service area in specific geographic and demographic terms and provide evidence-based enrollment projections for three (3) consecutive years following Candidacy application. Enrollment projections must be consistent with ABFSE collected new student statistics for the defined service area.
4. Must provide data from state, local, and/or regional workforce studies showing a need for licensed individuals in funeral service in the program's defined service area.
5. Must provide the names and addresses of the governing board that will exercise all powers that may be performed by the institution under the license or charter in item B.1.
6. Must have an advisory board composed of not less than seven (7) practicing and licensed members of the funeral service profession who are graduates of ABFSE accredited programs and others that might contribute to the quality of the educational process in the candidate program. In addition, the following information must be provided:
 - a. documentation that advisory board meetings will occur not less than once during each twelve (12) month period.
 - b. written minutes of advisory board meetings.
7. Must provide the name, address, and credentials of the chief executive officer directly accountable to the governing board and the name, address, and credentials of the individual responsible for the funeral service education program, if different.
8. At the time of the Candidacy application the individual responsible for the funeral service education program must:
 - a. be a full-time employee of the institution.
 - b. be a graduate of an ABFSE accredited program.
 - c. possess a valid license to practice as a funeral service professional.
 - d. provide official transcripts from a regionally accredited college or university to document completion of a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree. In such cases where the program director does not possess a Master's Degree or equivalent, the provisions of Standard 1.8 of Chapter IX apply (i.e. a Master's must be earned within five (5) years of initial appointment).
9. Must provide a detailed written explanation of the plans to meet each Standard of accreditation.
 - a. Must show evidence that the program's mission statement and the ABFSE Program Learning Outcomes are being met.

- b. Must have a catalog and other appropriate official publications available to students and the public containing the mission statement and program learning outcomes including but not limited to admission, withdrawal and graduation requirements, student conduct policies, grading policies, course names and identification numbers, summary descriptions and credit hours, financial policies for tuition, fees, and refunds, and academic calendars.
 - c. Must have an adequate financial base and provide a copy of the current budget, including the funeral service education program budget and a copy of the most recent institutional budget. A copy of the most recent externally reviewed audited institutional financial statement prepared by a Certified Public Accountant must be included.
 - d. Must have in place one (1) or more programs in funeral service education of at least sixty (60) semester or ninety (90) quarter credit hours with students actively enrolled in some phase of the funeral service education program beyond the general education core courses. The curriculum should be logically arranged with evidence to indicate that students are able to complete the program in not more than one and one half (1½) times the normal length of the program.
 - e. Must provide an outline of courses and course descriptions to cover the curriculum content areas of the Accreditation Manual (see Chapter IX), by quarter or semester hours.
 - f. Must provide course syllabi for all courses offered in the program.
 - g. Must provide evidence that facilities will meet the requirements of the ABFSE Standards of Accreditation prior to accreditation being awarded.
 - h. Must have learning resources adequate for the support of the academic program in funeral service education
10. MUST submit plans for additional funeral service education program faculty and facilities as the program expands and provide financial projections for three (3) consecutive years following Candidacy application.

D. WHEN PROGRAMS SEEK TO RE-INSTATE ACCREDITATION

The same eligibility requirements above apply. Additionally, the program must:

1. Provide an analysis of the underlying factors resulting in the withdrawal or surrender of accreditation, including personnel changes. If a consultant was used, his/her report must be attached.
2. Provide a detailed description of all steps taken to address program deficiencies in response to the withdrawal or surrender of accreditation.

E. PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. While programs are in Candidacy status, they may only describe their relationship to ABFSE as “Candidate for Accreditation.” The Candidate program may not be referred to in any manner which infers accreditation, including reference to a student being eligible to take the National Board Examination.
2. Each program applying for Candidacy, or already in Candidacy status, must publish the following statement in all printed materials until the program is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education:

CAUTION: This program is pursuing accreditation but is **NOT** accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE). Until accreditation is achieved, students graduating from this program are **NOT** eligible to take any licensing examination that requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program, including the National Board Examination.

CHAPTER V

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Accreditation refers to initial accreditation and re-accreditation (or renewal of accreditation). Candidacy follows the same process.

Accreditation procedures include:

- an application
- comprehensive review (also referred to as the Self study)
- site visit
- site visit team report
- response to the team report
- COA decision

A. APPLICATION

Accredited programs are reminded of an upcoming comprehensive review (Self study) process approximately eighteen (18) months in advance. This notice comes in the form of a letter to the institutional CEO with a copy to the Program Director from the ABFSE office. The comprehensive review schedule for each program appears in the ABFSE Directory of Programs found on the ABFSE website.

The Transmittal Form (found in Appendix B-3), serves as the application for all accreditations/re-accreditations.

There is a separate application for Candidacy and Initial Accreditation. Candidate programs must follow the steps described in Chapter IV.

The accreditation process may be initiated only at the request of the sponsoring institution's CEO or other authorized official. The application procedure is considered complete when the following items have been submitted to the ABFSE office:

- the Transmittal Form,
- the Self study Report with all supporting documentation,
- required fees as specified in the ABFSE Schedule of Fees (see Appendix D).

B. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW (SELF STUDY)

Comprehensive Review (Self Study) is the method by which an institution demonstrates that the accredited program is fulfilling the expectations of accreditation. Self study is both the process of evaluation done by the institution and the document presented to demonstrate the fulfillment of the process.

Definition: A Self study is a formal process through which an educational institution or program critically examines its structure and substance, evaluates the program's overall effectiveness relative to its mission, identifies specific strengths and deficiencies, and creates a plan for any necessary modifications and improvements. The process assesses the extent to which the program is in compliance with established accreditation Standards and should include consideration of external factors influencing the educational environment.

The Self study is:

- the activity that precedes the report;
- organized and systematic;
- conducted by and for the program with the participation of appropriate constituencies;
- comprehensive and considers all elements of the program;

The Self study:

- critically examines the current status of the program;
- judges overall effectiveness (conclusions should be reached);
- identifies and assesses specific strengths and deficiencies in an open, objective, and precise manner;
- helps establish a plan for modifications and improvements to amend any deficiencies uncovered during the process (formal long-range planning is a logical precursor to the Self study process);
- identifies external factors influencing the educational environment (e.g. conditions within the sponsoring program, projected changes in the profession's role, and the legal, social, political and economic climate affecting the program); and
- determines the extent to which the program is in compliance with established ABFSE Accreditation Standards.

1. ORGANIZATION OF SELF STUDY

The actual process for conducting the Self study will vary from program to program, but certain characteristics should apply in every instance.

One individual should be selected to have overall responsibility for the Self study, i.e. to see that the work is started in time, that appropriate progress is maintained and that departmental and committee assignments are properly prepared.

A steering committee should be formed. The committee should include representation from the institution's administrative staff, teaching faculty, students, alumni, and the governing board. Advisory Board input is valuable. Departmental personnel, librarians, faculty, staff and administrative officers must look at themselves critically in order to appraise objectively and to report honestly.

The general Chairperson will outline to participants the work that is to be done, the time schedule to be maintained, and the format of the Self study Report. For all these reasons, it is important that the program begin its Self study process approximately one (1) year in advance of the anticipated site visit.

The Self study process should culminate in the completion and presentation of the Self study Report.

2. SELF STUDY REPORT

Beginning in 2018, the ABFSE Self study document is created and submitted electronically.
(See Appendix C for additional details.)

The Self study Report will include the following components:

- Introduction
- Standards
- Additional Information

Introduction will include:

- Transmittal Form (Appendix B-3)
- Program and Institutional Data Form (Appendix B-4)
- Curriculum Distribution by ABFSE Content Area (Appendix B-6)
- Brief description of the Self study process, including a list of the participants and their assignments;
- A brief historical overview of the program;
- Description of steps taken to address any concerns from the last comprehensive review.

Standards

The program's efforts to comply with each Accreditation Standard will be described and supporting evidence will be uploaded. In order to facilitate complete responses, questions are provided for each Standard. Questions include prompts to upload pertinent evidence of compliance. This section is the primary content of the Self study Report.

Additional Information

This is an opportunity to summarize the program's strengths, concerns and plans to correct any issues discovered during the Self study process. Programs offering distance education will address additional questions in this section.

For additional guidance concerning the narrative portion of the Self study Report and the exhibits, refer to Appendix C of this Manual. The Self study Workshop is a valuable asset as well.

C. SITE VISIT

The site visit provides the opportunity to validate and/or clarify the contents of the program's Self study Report. A three (3) person team visits the campus over a two-three (2-3) day period and reports to COA. Additional time may be necessary if the institution offers more than one (1) accredited program.

Each program will be visited as part of the Candidacy and Initial Accreditation process, and periodically for renewal of Accreditation (at least once every seven [7] years). In addition, the COA may schedule a re-visit to any institution or program currently accredited if, in the judgment of the COA, situations have arisen in the institution or program which would justify a re-evaluation.

The comprehensive review / site visit schedule is maintained by the ABFSE office, reviewed by the COA and published in the ABFSE Directory with each school's information.

Authority for assigning the academic year in which a program is to be visited is vested in the COA.

Programs typically receive notification from the ABFSE office eighteen (18) months in advance of a pending visit.

Appropriate dates for the visit are determined by the ABFSE Executive Director and the Program Director. In establishing dates, consideration is given to the time necessary to conduct the Self study and prepare the Self study Report. The visit will be scheduled when students are present.

For Initial Accreditation, the visit shall be scheduled to ensure that practical courses in embalming, restorative art, and funeral service have been completed or are in operation either prior to or during the visit dates.

Written notification of the selected dates and the names of the site visit team members will be provided to the CEO of the sponsoring institution.

The program should provide a private workroom for the team, and materials relevant to the program that are not included in the Self study Report should be available for review in that location.

Team Members shall be admitted to all facilities used by the program. They shall inquire into all phases of management and operation of the program in order to verify the content of the Self study Report. They shall have complete freedom to confer with school officials, members of the faculty, students, advisory board and such others as deemed necessary by the team.

Team members shall visit classes to observe lectures, laboratory exercises, and other methods of instruction. It is understood that team members are not limited to any prearranged schedule but are free to observe and consult as they desire. Schedules of free hours of faculty is important. Team members will seek to cause as little disruption as possible to the routine of the program and institution.

The team will hold an exit interview with administration and program staff as selected by the administration. The purpose of the meeting is to make known to the program the findings of the team committee.

1. SCHEDULE

The duration, agenda and sequence of events for the site visit may vary according to the nature of the program to be visited. Most visits encompass three (3) days including travel but may vary depending on the size and

nature of the program, location of facilities, and other relevant factors. The site visit is a working assignment with minimal social activities.

Most visits begin with a private team meeting. This allows the team members to coordinate their efforts, review the site visit schedule and, identify areas of the program requiring specific attention. Depending on the location, the site visit may begin with a tour of clinical facilities on day one.

A brief campus tour of the funeral related facilities is customary. This will familiarize team members with the physical plant and the locations of scheduled appointments. Care must be taken that this tour is brief. Campus maps for team members will aid in this orientation.

See Appendix C for a sample site visit agenda.

2. EXIT INTERVIEW

Each site visit concludes with an Exit Interview. Representatives from the program and institution meet with the site visit team to review the team report. The Team Chairperson will summarize the team's findings and observations and discuss the subsequent events in the accreditation process.

This includes the anticipated dates for receipt of the written Site Visit report, timing of the program's response to the report and the subsequent review by the COA. If any factual errors in the team's findings or observations become apparent, they should be addressed during the exit interview.

[NOTE: Site Visit teams do not make recommendations concerning accreditation.]

D. SITE VISIT TEAM

A team ordinarily consists of three (3) members:

- the Chairperson or Team Chair, who is an educator from a discipline other than funeral service education;
- one (1) educator member who has been actively engaged in teaching or administration at an ABFSE accredited program on a full-time basis for at least five years; and
- one (1) funeral service licensee who has been a practitioner for at least five (5) years.

The ABFSE officers, the Chairperson of the COA, and members of the COA may not serve on a site visit team, unless the site visit is a focused visit for a specified purpose.

The Executive Director assigns the Team Chair and members of the site visit team in consultation with the program being examined. Care is taken to avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest between team members and the institution being evaluated and to select team members who understand the particular type of institution in which the program is located.

To assist in the selection of team members, the ABFSE office maintains a record of competent, experienced individuals with appropriate training to serve as team members.

E. SITE VISIT TEAM REPORT

Within thirty (30) days following the site visit, the Team Chair shall provide the ABFSE office with the team's written report, signed by all members of the team.

Within forty-five (45) days after the visit, the Executive Director shall forward copies of this report to the institutional CEO with a copy to the program director. The institution/program is free to distribute the report as it deems appropriate.

The site visit report shall contain narrative comments regarding the team's observations and shall include a summary of the program's strengths and concerns relative to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards. The comments and recommendations made in the report should be clear, factual, and specific without being unduly prescriptive as

to the precise manner in which unfavorable factors should be remedied, and with clear emphasis on items the team believes to be most in need of improvement.

F. RESPONSE TO THE TEAM REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer of the institution or the program director shall have an opportunity to provide written comments on the report prior to the COA accreditation decision. This is also an opportunity to provide supplemental (written) materials pertinent to the facts and conclusions in the report before the COA takes action.

G. COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION DECISION

COA makes all accreditation decisions following review of the Self study, site visit report, and the school response.

The institution will be notified of the time and location of the COA meeting during which the accreditation decision will be reviewed. Representatives from the institution are encouraged to be present in order to answer questions.

H. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING ACCREDITATION

1. PROGRAM DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adhere to the appropriate time frames. Prepare and submit to the ABFSE office all materials required for the comprehensive review, including the Self study Report. Make certain that copies are made for the institution's own use.
- Ensure that all necessary fees related to the accreditation process and site visit are submitted in a timely manner (see Appendix D).
- Confirm dates of visit with the ABFSE office, ensure that the date is acceptable to key personnel within the program. Notify practicum/clinical sites and preceptors to be visited and obtain necessary permissions for visitors.
- Arrange for reasonably priced, convenient, and comfortable hotel accommodations for the team.
- Provide in advance to the Team Chair all information regarding hotel accommodations, availability of taxi or limo service between airport and hotel, and transportation arrangements between hotel and program.
- Work with the Team Chair to determine the site visit schedule, including individuals to be interviewed and visited.
- Secure a private workroom on the institution's premises for team use. Have available in the workroom any supporting documents that have not been uploaded into the Self study.
- Coordinate the activities during the site visit.
- Facilitate a written response to the site visit and team report for consideration at the assigned COA meeting. If necessary, submit supplemental information to COA following receipt of the team report. Proper format for the response and supplemental materials will be coordinated with the ABFSE Executive Director. Electronic submission is preferred. Instructions are provided in the communication with the institution.
- Programs are encouraged to provide to the ABFSE office written evaluation of the site visit and the team itself.

2. SITE VISIT TEAM CHAIRPERSON'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Confirm dates of visit and team roster with the Executive Director and the Program Director.
- Assume responsibility for all visit related correspondence with team members.
- Provide team members with details of hotel accommodations and transportation. Schedule appropriate time for a preliminary team meeting (on the evening) prior to the start of the visit.
- Well in advance of the visit, thoroughly review all Self study materials including the report from the preceding site visit.

- Be familiar with the ABFSE accreditation procedures, policies and the Standards.
- Work with Program Director in arranging the visit schedule, including individuals to be interviewed and off-campus locations to be visited.
- In advance of the visit, inform team members of their assignments and specific areas requiring their attention and expertise.
- During the visit, conduct preliminary meeting with program personnel, as well as the exit interview. The Team Chair has the primary responsibility to see that time is used efficiently and resist any tendency on the part of the team members or the program to engage in irrelevant discussions and activities. The Chair should ensure that all essential personnel, sites and support services are reviewed and visited.
- The Team Chair should ensure that any faculty, student, or other interested persons who wish to speak to the team have the opportunity to do so. The Team Chair must guide the team members in maintaining objectivity and sensitivity throughout the visit.
- Draft final report and circulate it among team members for their signature. Submit the final report to the ABFSE office within thirty (30) days after the site visit.
- Attend the COA meeting at which the program's accreditation status will be reviewed and be prepared to discuss the team findings with the COA.

3. SITE VISIT TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review thoroughly all program materials well in advance of the visit, including the Self study Report with uploads, and the program and institutional website.
- Become familiar with the ABFSE accreditation procedures, policies, and the Standards, including any software system currently in use for Self study preparation.
- Work with Team Chairperson in determining specific areas to be evaluated during visit.
- Avoid irrelevant discussions and activities during the visit and make every effort to maintain objectivity throughout the visit and evaluation. Members should bear in mind that the program is to be evaluated in light of its own stated objectives.
- Participate in the exit interview and the timely preparation of site visit report, including timely submission of expenses.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Final evaluation of a program will be made in accordance with the extent to which it complies with the total provisions of The Manual with special importance to the Standards.

A. COMMITTEE REVIEW OF MATERIALS AND PROGRAM TESTIMONY

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) will consider all information obtained from the program's transmittal and program Data Form, Self study Report, the site visit team report and the program's written response to the report in reaching a decision on the program's accreditation status. The site visit team chair attends the scheduled COA meeting in order to provide an overview of the program and present the findings. In addition, the program is encouraged to exercise its right of appearance before the COA at the time its status is being considered. The purpose of the appearance is to clarify any unresolved questions the COA may have concerning the materials submitted by the program and the site visit team.

B. COMMITTEE (COA) ACTIONS

NOTE:

Unless the COA itself demonstrates an appropriate basis for doing otherwise, the COA shall not take favorable accreditation action concerning any institution or program for which another recognized accreditation agency, or a state post-secondary review commission has (1) imposed an interim action leading to suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or pre-accreditation, or (2) notified the institution or program of a threatened loss of accreditation, or (3) threatened by the State or Province/Territory with loss of legal authority to provide postsecondary education. (See page 6-4 (E) below for the detailed policy.)

The COA shall take one of the following actions.

1. Grant Initial Accreditation or Continuation of Candidacy Status in compliance with Chapter IV.
2. Grant Initial or Continuing Accreditation when the accreditation review process confirms that the program is in compliance with the Standards. The term "initial" is used to indicate that the program is being accredited for the first time (following Candidacy).

For deficiencies, if any, the COA requires evidence documenting correction by a specific date. The COA notification letter contains a clear statement of each deficiency and a due date for a progress report or plan of correction. Failure to submit a satisfactory progress report or plan to correct the deficiencies may result in reduction of the length of accreditation, an early accreditation review, or other appropriate action.

3. Issue a Warning. When the COA finds that a program has pursued a course deviating from the established criteria or policies to an extent that gives concern to the COA, it may issue a warning to the program to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities within a stated period of time. A warning does not alter the candidacy or accredited status of the program. The committee may allow no more than 18 months for a one-year program and no more than twenty-four (24) months for two (2) and four (4) year programs, to bring deficient practices into compliance with all ABFSE Standards of Accreditation.
4. Probation. When a candidate or accredited program fails to meet the COA's criteria or policies, fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the COA, including Warning, or fails to submit funds due, it will be placed on probation until such time as appropriate corrective action is taken by the program. The period of probation, however, may not exceed twelve (12) months if the longest program offered by the institution is less than twelve (12) months, eighteen (18) months if the longest program offered by the institution is at least one (1) year but less than two (2) years, or two (2) years if the longest program offered by the institution is at least two (2) years in length.

While on probation, the program will be subject to special scrutiny by the COA, including a requirement to submit prescribed reports, and possible special visits(s) by representatives of the COA. The costs of special visits are borne by the institution.

Probation does not alter the candidacy or accredited status of the program.

If the program has not taken steps satisfactory to the COA to remove the cause or causes for its probation at the end of the specified time, the COA will issue a Show Cause order.

5. Show Cause. If the conditions which led to the probation are not removed within the stated time, the program will lose its accreditation unless it can show good cause why accreditation should not be immediately removed.

Prior to removing accreditation, the COA shall notify the program in advance (at least six [6] months) that it must show good cause why accreditation should not be withdrawn. If accreditation is continued, it may include stipulations to include special visits by representatives of the COA, periodic reports, and specific COA action at regularly or specially scheduled meetings.

While under Show Cause, the program will be subject to special scrutiny by the COA, including a requirement to submit prescribed reports and possible special visit(s) by representatives of the COA. The costs of special visits are borne by the institution.

A Show Cause order does not alter the candidacy or accredited status of the program.

The application for candidacy, initial accreditation or re-accreditation may be withheld by a deferral or a denial.

6. Deferral. A deferral is not a final decision. It is interlocutory in nature to provide further guidance and time for the program to correct certain deficiencies.
7. Denial of Accreditation. A denial is a final decision which is subject to a request for review by the COA and subsequent appeal under the published appeal policies and procedures in Chapter VII.
8. Withdraw Candidacy or Accreditation. If in the judgment of the COA, a program has not satisfactorily explained or corrected matters of which it has been given notice, its candidacy may be withdrawn involuntarily or allowed to lapse, or its accreditation terminated. In such a case, the program must re-start the entire accreditation process to qualify for candidacy or accreditation. See Section D.

Nonrenewal or withdrawal of candidacy or of accreditation is subject to review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the American Board (See Chapter VII). If a program's candidacy is withdrawn or if its accreditation is terminated, its status will continue unchanged if it requests a review and later an appeal until the review and appeal processes have been completed. Otherwise, its candidacy or accreditation ends on the date when the time period permitting such a request expires.

Any program whose accreditation has been withdrawn by the COA or voluntarily surrendered may not reapply for candidacy for at least ninety days from the date of such action. The COA shall determine the conditions for reaccreditation. Expenses incurred by a visitation for reaccreditation shall be paid by the program.

In all cases of negative action, the COA will give the program written reasons for its decision and advise the program of its right to appeal as outlined in Chapter VII.

The COA will notify the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and other entities of the voluntary relinquishment or withdrawal of accreditation of any program or institution it accredits as noted in C 3. Negative actions will be reported on the ABFSE website and the decision letters issued to the schools become public record.

- 1 9. Stipulations and Recommendations. Accreditation actions taken by the COA may be accompanied by
2 Stipulations and/or Recommendations.
3

4 Stipulations are conditions imposed on a program related to its inadequate compliance with specific
5 Accreditation Standards. A program receiving stipulations must submit a written report to the COA within
6 a prescribed period of time indicating the program's progress in achieving compliance with the Standard(s)
7 cited. Failure of the program to respond satisfactorily may result in the COA's issuing a warning, placing the
8 program on probation, or issuing a show cause order.
9

10 A Recommendation is a non-binding suggestion for improvement in certain areas of the Program.
11
12

- 13 10. Notice. The program shall be notified of the final action of the COA within thirty (30) days of the date of
14 such action. All communications of the COA relating to the denial, deferral, limitation, or withdrawal of
15 accreditation shall be by registered or certified mail, addressed to the chief administrative officer of the
16 institution with a copy for the program director concerned and shall contain, in addition to the COA's
17 decision, a copy of the ABFSE Appeal Policy.
18
19

20 C. PUBLICATION OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS
21

- 22 1. The COA shall annually publish a list of accredited programs and, when a program is to be added to or
23 deleted from the list, such notice shall be made within thirty (30) days of the final COA action. Accredited
24 programs and their sponsoring institutions are listed in the Directory of Accredited Institutions which is
25 published on the ABFSE website (www.abfse.org).
26
27 2. The American Board will announce publicly, as appropriate, through its Executive Director the status of each
28 program subject to an adverse action in accordance with COA policy on "Disclosure and Confidentiality of
29 Information" in Chapter IX of this manual. If a specific inquiry is made about a program which has been
30 placed on probation or has received a "show cause" status, the Executive Director shall inform the inquirer
31 of such status and the reasons therefore.
32
33 3. The COA will notify the Secretary of Education (by electronic means), the appropriate State licensing or
34 authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public by placing the information on the
35 ABFSE website, after it makes the decision to award initial or preaccreditation (Candidacy) or a decision to
36 renew an institutions or program's accreditation or preaccreditation (Candidacy). Decisions must be shared
37 with the USDE and the public the same day that the program/institution is notified (within 24 hours).
38
39 4. The COA will notify the Secretary of Education (by electronic means), the appropriate State licensing or
40 authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time it notifies the institution or
41 program of the decision.
42
43 a. to place an institution or program on probation or equivalent status (including placing an institution
44 or program on Show Cause status - see B-5 above); or
45
46 b. to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation or preaccreditation (Candidacy)
47 of an institution or program.
48
49 5. The COA will provide written notice to the public of the decisions listed in paragraphs 4 (a) and 4 (b) within
50 24 hours of its notice to the institution or program by placing this information on the ABFSE web site.
51
52 6. For any decision listed in paragraph 4 (b) of this section, the COA will make available to the Secretary of
53 Education (by electronic means), the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and the public upon
54 request no later than 60 days after the decision a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the Committee
55 decision and the comments, if any, that the affected institution or program has made in regard to that decision.
56
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7. The COA will notify the Secretary of Education (by electronic means), the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and, upon request, the public, and place notice on the ABFSE web site, if an accredited or candidate institution or program decides to withdraw voluntarily from the accreditation process or lets its accreditation or candidacy lapse. Such notification will be made within thirty (30) days of receiving notification from the institution or program that it is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation or within thirty (30) days of the date on which accreditation or candidacy lapses.
8. The COA shall submit upon request to the Secretary of Education the following:
 - a. Copy of Annual ABFSE Directory.
 - b. Any concerns relative to Title IV compliance and/or non-compliance for those programs for which the Committee serves as "gatekeeper."
 - c. Any changes in standards, committee policies, or procedures, which might alter the COA's scope of recognition or compliance with reporting requirements as listed in #3 and #4 above.
9. The COA shall submit to the Secretary of Education a summary of the Committee's major accrediting activities via the USDE DAPIP system.
10. The COA will share with other appropriate, recognized accrediting agencies and recognized State approval agencies, upon request, information about the accreditation and preaccreditation (Candidacy) status of an institution or program and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited or candidate institution or program.
11. The COA will immediately report to the U.S. Department of Education information it received and believes likely to be correct regarding any program or institution it accredits that may be involved in fraud or abuse.

D. WITHDRAWAL OF PROGRAM FROM ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. A program may withdraw from the accreditation process at any point up to the time of the final action of the COA. This policy applies to all programs, whether they are seeking Candidacy, Initial Accreditation, Annual Renewal, or Continuation of Accreditation. To withdraw from the process, the Chief Administrative Officer of the program shall notify the American Board in writing that it is withdrawing its Application for Accreditation or Candidacy.
2. Should an accredited program close, it will notify the American Board of that intent along with an appropriate teach-out plan including the anticipated date of closure and the graduation date for its last class.

E. ADVERSE ACTION BY A STATE OR OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCY

1. Unless the committee itself is satisfied that there is good reason to do otherwise (see also E3 below), the COA will not grant initial or renewed accreditation or preaccreditation (Candidacy) to an institution, or a program offered by an institution, if the COA knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of:
 - a. a pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State;
 - b. a decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation;
 - c. a pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institutions; accreditation or preaccreditation; or
 - d. probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.

2. If an ABFSE accredited or candidate program has had an adverse action taken against it, or against its institution, by another accrediting agency or state agency, the COA shall require the program to submit a written report describing the reason(s) for the action and the impact the action has, if any, on the program's ability to continue to meet the ABFSE Standards of Accreditation. The report will be discussed and acted upon, as necessary, at the next scheduled meeting of the COA. If, in the opinion of the Executive Director and the Chair of the COA, the adverse action requires earlier consideration by the COA, a special meeting may be called.

The COA will review the information submitted by the institution against the requirements of this policy and advise the institution if additional information is needed or if the COA plans to take additional action based on the information. That action may include requesting a formal report, scheduling a site visit, or such other action as the COA determines is appropriate based on the situation.

3. The COA may grant accreditation or preaccreditation (Candidacy) to an institution or program described in this section (E-1, a-d) if it provides to the Secretary of Education, within 30 days of its action, a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its Standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude the COA's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation.

F. COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION (COA) MEETING PROCEDURES

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) meets for consideration of program accreditation twice per year, in the spring and fall, with other meetings scheduled as may be necessary. It invites representatives of the programs under consideration to attend the meeting during the discussion about their program. In these cases, the COA functions as follows:

1. All Committee meetings are held in executive session.
2. For comprehensive evaluations, Committee members receive, and read, all pertinent materials prior to the meeting. One member of the COA is appointed to lead the discussion on each program under review.
3. At the meeting, the site visit team chair presents a verbal report on the campus visit.
4. After the chair report, the assigned discussion leader and other COA members query the site visit team chair, if necessary, on items which may be unclear.
5. Once the site visit team chair's report is complete, program representatives are invited into the room for further discussion.
 - a. Following introductions, program representatives are invited to make opening comments.
 - b. The discussion leader queries the program representatives on issues of interest and/or concern. Once the discussion leader has concluded, the floor is opened to other COA members to ask questions, if any.
 - c. Once the questions and discussion session has concluded, the program representatives are asked to leave the meeting room.
6. The COA chair with the committee still in Executive Session, invites a motion from the committee concerning the program under consideration. Following discussion and/or amendment of the motion, a vote is taken.
7. Immediately after the vote, the ABFSE Executive Director conveys the action of the Committee verbally to the program representatives, if they are available.
8. Within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the COA meeting, the action taken by the COA is sent to the institution's CEO and program director by letter and electronic copy from the Executive Director and reported to the Secretary of the US DE and the public.

CHAPTER VII

APPELLATE PROCEDURE

A. COMPOSITION OF THE APPELLATE BOARD

1. Membership

The Appellate Board shall be composed of three members. These members shall be educators who have had at least five years' administrative experience in an accredited institution of higher learning other than in the field of funeral service education, are experienced in accrediting procedures, and have had at least fifteen years' experience in teaching and/or administration in an institution of higher learning.

The ABFSE Executive Director will develop a list of prospective panel members from names provided by the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors and other sources available to the Executive Director and present that list to the COA Chairperson, who will select the panel members within thirty (30) days after the date of the filing of the appeal. The Appellate Board shall select its chairperson from among its members.

All members of the appeals panel must meet the Conflict of Interest tests shown on the Conflict of Interest form in Appendix G and overviewed in Section C of Chapter X of The Manual. Members must also sign the Conflict of Interest statement.

2. Term of Board

An Appellate Board shall be appointed for each new appeal; however, if more than one appeal is to be heard on the same day the panel may hear multiple appeals.

3. Secretary of the Appellate Board

The Secretary of the Appellate Board shall be the Executive Director of the American Board, who shall serve without voice or vote.

4. In the case of a single-purpose, stand-alone funeral service/mortuary science institution whose recognition by the ABFSE allows it to participate in federal programs and for which COA recognition serves the “gate-keeper” function insofar as the U.S. Department of Education is concerned, a public member (who must meet the same criteria established for public members of the COA as laid out in Section A of Article VI of the by-laws in Chapter I) will also be appointed by the COA Chairperson.

B. ELIGIBILITY FOR APPEAL

Each decision of the COA involving either denial or withdrawal of accreditation may be appealed by the program/institution involved. The program/institution will be notified of its right to appeal the action in the initial letter conveying the decision of the Committee.

C. FILING A NOTICE OF APPEAL

Appeals of the final decision of the COA denying or withdrawing accreditation shall be perfected by filing a notice of appeal, signed by an authorized representative of the institution, with the Executive Director of the American Board no later than thirty (30) days after receipt by the institution of the decision of the Committee. Filing a notice of appeal shall operate as a stay of the decision of the committee.

The expenses of the appellate procedure shall be borne as follows:

1. The American Board shall bear the cost of its own legal, administrative, travel, and other internal costs.
2. The appealing institution shall bear the cost of its own legal, administrative, travel and other internal costs. The appealing institution shall bear the cost of all stenographic reporting fees related to the procedure.
3. The appealing Institution/program must submit along with its statement of Intent to file an appeal a fee of \$5000. If the decision is ultimately upheld by the panel, any panel and related costs over and above the \$5,000 will be paid by the institution/program. If the decision is reversed or returned for reconsideration, the COA will bear any additional costs over the \$5,000.

D. THE APPEALS PROCESS

1. Date of Hearing

The Executive Director of the American Board, upon receipt of a notice of appeal, shall docket same in his/her records and, within ten (10) days after appointment of the Appellate Board, shall notify the appealing institution of the date, time and place of hearing. No date for a hearing shall be set later than sixty (60) days from the date of the completion of appointment of the Appellate Board, nor earlier than sixty (60) days after filing the appeal.

2. Briefs

Communications from the COA and from the appealing institution/program to the panel shall be made through the ABFSE office. The COA Executive Director shall be the contact person for such communications. Each party (i.e., the COA and the appealing institution/program) shall receive copies of all documents submitted by either party.

Any institution shall have the right to file a brief in support of the Appeal. Ten (10) copies of such brief must be filed with the Executive Director of the American Board no later than thirty (30) days after the institution files its notice of appeal. The COA shall similarly file ten copies of a brief in response to the institution's brief no later than thirty (30) days after the institution's brief is filed. The institution's brief shall contain a concise and complete statement of the points on which the institution challenges the decision of the COA, any points challenging the criteria of the American Board as they particularly affect the institution appealing, and argument on such points. The COA's response brief shall contain a concise and complete statement of the rationale for the Committee's decisions which are the subject of the appeal, and a discussion of the points raised in the institution's appeal brief.

A desire of the institution or the COA to make oral argument before the Appellate Board shall be indicated on the title page of its brief by the words, "Oral Argument Desired."

3. Scope of the Appeal

The Appellate Board's review of an institution's appeal shall be limited to the institution's brief in support of appeal if any brief is filed, the response of the COA, and a transcript of any oral argument or testimony presented to the Appellate Board. Upon review, the Appellate Board may consider not only the question presented by the decision of the COA and related documentary evidence, but also the question of whether the regulations and criteria of the American Board in the particular case are unjust, unfair, or unworkable.

1 4. Hearings

2
3 Prior to the hearing, the COA will provide the panel members with an overview of the ABFSE/COA and its
4 operations. A copy of all materials presented to the panel shall also be made available to the
5 institution/program.

6
7 a. Presiding Officer. The hearing shall be presided over by a hearing officer, who shall be an attorney
8 appointed by the American Board. The American Board of Funeral Service Education Board attorney
9 may serve in this capacity. The presiding officer shall not have voice or vote in the Appellate Board's
10 deliberations. The hearing shall generally be conducted in accordance with the recognized rules of
11 procedure and evidence.

12
13 b. Oral Testimony. Oral testimony may be presented at the time of the hearing.

14
15 c. Arguments. The institution may offer oral argument in support of the Appeal at the hearing. The COA
16 may offer oral argument in support of its decision and in reply to the institution's argument. The
17 institution shall have time to reply to the argument of the COA. Length of arguments may be limited by
18 the Appellate Board.

19
20 The panel may set time limits on testimony presented by both the appealing institution program and the
21 COA and may otherwise structure the hearing as it determines most appropriate.

22
23 d. Report of Proceedings. The Appellate Board shall cause a recording to be made of the hearing. The
24 institution appealing shall have the right to secure a typed transcript of said recording by paying the
25 costs involved.

26
27 e. Legal Representation. The institution and the COA may be represented at the hearings by legal counsel
28 of their own choosing. The counsel shall be afforded the same rights as would normally be made
29 available to the institution/program or to the COA during the hearing. The counsel shall be authorized
30 to make any presentation that the institution or program itself would be authorized to make.

31 f. The appeal panel shall include in its report the rationale for the basis of the finding.

32
33 E. DECISION OF THE APPELLATE BOARD

34
35 1. The Appellate Board has several options for action:

36
37 a. Uphold the action of the COA;

38
39 b. Recommend reconsideration by the COA; or

40
41 c. Amend, modify, or reverse an adverse action by the COA. If such action is taken, the board shall clearly
42 stipulate in its formal report the terms, conditions, or parameters of its decision.

43
44 2. The COA is responsible for implementing the panel's decision.

45
46 3. There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Appellate Board.

47
48 4. The Appellate Board, within thirty (30) days after the hearing, shall prepare an opinion in writing containing
49 its decision. The Secretary of the Appellate Board shall prepare sufficient copies of said opinion and, within
50 ten (10) days after receipt, shall mail a copy of the opinion and decision to the authorized representative of
51 the institution and to the COA.

52
53 5. If the panel remands the decision back to the COA, it must identify specific issues that the COA must address
54 in its action following the remand. The COA must, in such instances, act in a manner consistent with the
55 appeal panel's decisions or instructions.

F. DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

1. The Committee on Accreditation, within thirty 30 days after receiving the recommendation of the Appellate Board, shall make a final decision on the merits of the appeal and notify the institution of its final decision.
2. There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Committee on Accreditation.
3. The COA will place on the ABFSE web site any official comment submitted as a rebuttal by an institution or program. If such comment is extensive, it will be provided in alternate ways such as through a link or other electronic means or reference to—and appropriate contact information for—the school or program itself. In the absence of any such comment, the ABFSE/COA will indicate that the institution/program did not submit a statement despite being given an opportunity to do so.

NOTE: To meet the existing requirement promulgated by the Department of Education that an accreditation agency make information available to the public regarding adverse actions without waiting for a specific request that it do so, the ABFSE/COA presently posts on its web site all such decisions and also advises several agencies identified by the U.S. Department of Education of the decisions. The Department requires that accrediting agencies also include in such publications a reference to the specific standard(s) whose failure to be met led to the adverse action and also publish the school's or program's response to the adverse action.

Note: This applies to Denial/Withdrawal of Accreditation.
Probation responses are also posted on USDE website.

CHAPTER VIII

MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

A. ANNUAL RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE ABFSE

1. All programs accredited by the American Board must submit an Annual Report to the Committee on Accreditation for the purpose of continuing their accreditation by the Committee. The Annual Report is to be submitted in addition to any other interim or progress reports the Committee may require of the program as the result of an accreditation action.

The Report shall be sent to the Executive Director of the American Board no later than February 15 each year. Failure to submit the Annual Report will result in the program's being placed on probation immediately by the Committee on Accreditation and could lead to removal of accreditation.

The Annual Report will:

- a. Inform the Committee on Accreditation about any significant changes which have taken place during the past year, including those involving administration, budgets, faculty, curriculum, physical facilities, and other pertinent matters.
- b. Provide information as to action by the program on recommendations or stipulations made by the Committee on Accreditation following a recent site visit or other accreditation action.
- c. Furnish accurate, current data to be published in the Directory of Accredited Programs.
- d. Provide the Committee on Accreditation with the following:
 - Applicable licensing examination pass rate for past year.
 - Record of written student complaints received, if any.
 - Summary of U. S. Department of Education financial aid reviews (for "gatekeeper" colleges only).
 - Default rate for federal student financial aid (for "gatekeeper" colleges only).
 - Applicable student outcomes information for past year.

The Executive Director of the American Board shall report in writing to the Committee on Accreditation the failure of any program to provide required reports.

A copy of the Annual Report Form is located in Appendix B of this Manual.

B. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports may be required by the Committee on Accreditation and are always required when a COA action is accompanied by a stipulation related to an Accreditation Standard. The program shall be notified of the issues to be addressed in the Progress Report and the date on which the report is due. Reports are to be submitted to the Executive Director of the American Board who will forward them to the Committee for action.

Programs must ensure that the reports address all items cited and be submitted within the specified period of time. Failure to respond may jeopardize the program's accreditation status.

C. CONTINUATION OF ACCREDITATION

All programs accredited by the American Board must undergo a site visit and comprehensive review at least once every seven (7) years; the interval between visits may be shorter if so specified by the Committee on Accreditation.

When an accredited program is due for comprehensive review, the Executive Director of the ABFSE will so notify the program approximately eighteen (18) months prior to the anticipated date of the site visit so that the program will have sufficient time to prepare for its re-evaluation. The procedures for applying for the re-evaluation and continuation of accreditation are described in Chapter V of this Manual.

All single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions must be visited at least once during the normal comprehensive review term (essentially a mid-cycle review). The visit is to be conducted by representatives of the Committee on Accreditation for confirmation of continuing compliance with ABFSE Standards. Costs of the visit will be borne by the institution.

D. CHANGES IN SPONSORSHIP

1. Sponsorship

A change in sponsorship occurs when the institution providing an accredited program in funeral service education relinquishes its control of the program to another institution and no longer participates in those activities which normally constitute sponsorship. In such instances, the ABFSE requires the following:

- a. At least thirty (30) days prior to a change in sponsorship, the institution relinquishing sponsorship shall notify the ABFSE Executive Director in writing that a change of sponsorship is anticipated, the reasons for the change, the anticipated effective date of the change, and the name, address, and phone number of the new sponsoring institution and its Chief Executive Officer and Program Director.
- b. The institution assuming sponsorship of the accredited program shall notify the ABFSE Executive Director in writing of its intent to accept sponsorship and shall submit the appropriate substantive change form (See Appendix K) and fee.
- c. The Executive Director of the ABFSE shall forward the above information to the Committee on Accreditation for its review. The Committee on Accreditation may, at its discretion:
 - (1) Approve the change in sponsorship and continue the accreditation status of the program.
 - (2) Request additional information before reaching a decision.
 - (3) Require the new institution to conduct a program Self study.

The Committee's choice of action shall depend upon its assessment of the extent to which the change in sponsorship affects the program's continued compliance with the Standards for Accreditation and the provisions of The Manual.

- d. In all cases of change in sponsorship, the institution that has undergone the change in sponsorship which has resulted in a change of control must undergo a site visit conducted by the Committee on Accreditation. This visit must take place within six (6) months of the change of sponsorship, with costs borne by the institution.

See also Section I in this chapter, Chapter X. Section I, and Appendix K.

2. Mergers

A merger occurs when two (2) or more institutions sponsoring programs in funeral service education combine to form one institution. The resulting institution must meet the accreditation requirements as a new institution. In such instances, candidacy status for the new institution may be waived at the option of the Committee on Accreditation.

Currently accredited programs seeking approval must present the new curricula or curriculum in written form.

Accreditation shall be based upon "Initial Accreditation" procedures and criteria. However, well-documented written materials for an acceptable new funeral service curriculum may be acted upon by the COA at its discretion without recourse to candidacy status, a formal Self study document, a site visit, or payment of appropriate fees.

E. NEW PROGRAM ADDITIONS IN ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

When an accredited institution wishes to offer a new or additional funeral service program or curriculum, the substantive change cover sheet and Change Form 9 (see Appendix K) must be submitted. A site visit will be conducted, with costs borne by the institution within six (6) months of the effective change date. Recognition of the new program or curriculum by the COA may be obtained by submitting documentation that the new or additional program(s) are in compliance with the Accreditation Standards and the Manual requirements.

Offering the accredited program from an additional location also requires COA approval following submission of Substantive Change Form 8.

F. UNACCREDITED PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS/DEPARTMENTS

ABFSE accredited institutions/departments which choose to offer, in addition to accredited programs, unaccredited programs, must comply with following procedures:

1. Publications describing the unaccredited program must contain the following caveat: "This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education owing to the fact that it does not include instruction in the following areas: (list all deficits). 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."
2. The academic transcript for graduates of unaccredited programs must carry the following wording: "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."

This requirement does not apply to a bachelor degree completion program which requires graduation from an ABFSE-accredited program as a condition for admission.

G. COMPLAINTS ABOUT ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

The discussion in this section applies to all complaints about accredited programs or institutions whether received randomly, received during a site visit, or received as part of the "third party comment" provisions outlined in Section J of Chapter VIII.

1. Alleged Violations

Neither the COA nor the ABFSE attempts to resolve disagreements or misunderstandings concerning course grades, teaching methodologies, fee and tuition structures, program requirements, employment issues, etc. among various parties and/or organizations that are unrelated to accreditation Standards. When either the COA or the ABFSE receives such complaints, individuals submitting the complaint(s) will be encouraged to submit the matter directly to the program director, institution president, or other party or parties involved.

It is recognized that the COA/ABFSE, its officials, and its representatives as well as site visit teams may from time to time hear student and other complaints (including third party complaints/comments referred to in Section J of Chapter VIII) either during an accreditation cycle or outside of the accreditation cycle. In such cases, no action shall be taken unless the complaint specifically deals with an accreditation standard, involves what appears to be a significant ethical violation, or involves what appears to be a legal issue.

- If the complaint deals with the possible violation of an accreditation standard, the provisions outlined herein and in G.2 below will apply.
- If the complaint raises a serious ethical issue, the complainant will be advised that a written complaint is the best way to proceed. Complainant must specifically authorize the COA/ABFSE to discuss the matter with the appropriate party or parties. In such instances, the procedures identified herein and in G.2 below will be followed.
- If the complaint raises a legal issue, the complaint will be encouraged to report the matter to the appropriate civil authorities.

Notification of alleged violations of the Standards of Accreditation should be made within three (3) months of the complainant becoming aware of the Standard alleged to have been violated and after all available campus procedures have been pursued. The Committee on Accreditation will not consider alleged violations which can be and are more properly resolved within the institution's own system of due process and grievance or situations which are outside the accreditation Standards.

A standard form for the submission of complaints is available on the ABFSE website or by contacting the ABFSE office. Use of the form encourages compilation of the information necessary to adequately evaluate the complaint.

2. Investigation and Consideration of Alleged Violations

The Executive Director of the American Board will send a copy of the allegations and complaint, submitted as required in #1 above, to the institution concerned and to the Chairperson of the Committee on Accreditation, within ten (10) days of its receipt. Also, within ten (10) days of receipt, the complainant will be notified of the receipt of the complaint and will be supplied with a copy of the ABFSE complaint policy.

Formal Complaints

When the Executive Director receives a formal complaint, it is reviewed to ensure that it properly alleges non-compliance with a Standard. If the complaint does not allege non-compliance with a Standard, the complaint is dismissed by the Executive Director and the complainant is given notice of such action. (Alternatively, the complainant could be given the opportunity to amend the complaint within thirty [30] days).

If the Executive Director determines the complaint does allege non-compliance with a Standard, the Executive Director forwards the details of the complaint to the responsible official at the school, citing the Standards that are alleged to have been violated.

The school has thirty (30) days to respond.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the school response, the Executive Director in consultation with the COA Chair, will:

- determine that there is not a sufficient basis to sustain the allegations in the complaint. The Executive Director will then notify the school and the complainant that the complaint has been dismissed. This action will be reported to the full COA at the next regular meeting.

OR

- refer the matter to the COA at the next regularly scheduled meeting (if within sixty [60] days from the receipt of the school's response) or by special meeting if more than sixty (60) days before the next regular meeting or if the Executive Director determines that the complaint is of an urgent nature.

When a complaint is forwarded to the COA for action, the COA may:

- (a) appoint an individual or a subcommittee to investigate the complaint to establish facts,
- (b) if sufficient facts are established, require the school to take certain action to comply with the Standard(s),
- (c) defer the inquiry to the next re-accreditation process for the school or
- (d) dismiss the complaint.

Anonymous Complaints

When an anonymous complaint is received, the Executive Director is to determine if the complaint alleges non-compliance with a Standard. If the complaint does not allege non-compliance with a Standard, the complaint is dismissed.

If the complaint does allege non-compliance with a Standard, the complaint is reviewed by the site visit team during the next re-accreditation visit.

If the Executive Director determines that:

- (a) the anonymous complaint is of a serious nature and
- (b) requiring identification of the complainant would jeopardize the investigation and pose a significant risk to the complainant, the complaint will be referred to the COA for consideration at the next regular meeting (if within sixty [60] days from the receipt of the complaint) or by special meeting if more than sixty (60) days before the next regular meeting or if the ED determines that the complaint is of an urgent nature.

3. Following are the actions available in responding to a complaint:

- Should evidence submitted in answer to the complaint satisfy the Committee on Accreditation, the committee shall clear the institution of the charges. Both complainant and institution will be notified of this within forty-eight (48) hours of the committee meeting.
- Should the answer to the complaint not satisfy the Committee on Accreditation, it may delay a decision and require additional information from either or both the complainant and the institution. The request for additional information shall be sent within seven (7) days of the COA meeting and any additional information will be required to be filed with the COA within thirty (30) days thereafter.
- Should the answer to the complaint not satisfy the Committee on Accreditation, and if no further information is required, the COA may give notice to the program and advise the complainant and otherwise publish the action (see Committee Actions, Chapter 6, B. 3-7, pages 6-1 through 6-3 of a warning, probation, show cause, revocation of Candidacy, or termination of Accreditation within forty-eight (48) hours of the committee meeting unless satisfactory action is taken by the program. The COA may take additional actions appropriate to the situation.
- Action by the Committee on Accreditation is final, subject only to the appeal process for adverse actions (see Chapter VII above).

H. SPECIAL EVALUATIONS OR SITE VISITS TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH ABFSE STANDARDS

It is the responsibility of the COA to ensure that all programs remain in compliance with ABFSE Standards throughout their accreditation or preaccreditation (Candidacy) period. When the Executive Director receives credible information from any source that a program is out of compliance with any of the American Board Standards, the Executive Director will discuss with the Chair of the Committee on Accreditation whether there is a need for a special evaluation or site visit to that program. If a special evaluation or site visit is determined to be necessary, the following steps will be followed:

1. The program will be notified in writing that there is evidence that the program is out of compliance with one or more Standards.
2. The program will be asked to file a complete and concise written response to the allegation within one week. In the case of a standard related to the immediate health and safety of students and staff, the program will be asked to file a complete and concise written response to the allegation within seventy-two (72) hours.

3. Based on the program response, the Chair of the Committee on Accreditation will determine if a special evaluation or site visit is appropriate.
4. If a site visit is required, the Executive Director will appoint the person(s) in consultation with the Chair of the Committee on Accreditation. For issues related to health and safety, the evaluation or site visit will be scheduled within one (1) week of the decision to proceed with an evaluation. The cost(s) of the visit will be borne by the institution.
5. The site visit team will draft a report on the findings from the evaluation.
6. A copy of the report will be sent to the program for a written response.
7. The report of the site visit team and the program response to the report will be considered by the Committee on Accreditation at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the compliance issue is considered by the COA Chair to be too serious to wait for the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on Accreditation, a special meeting, (virtual or in person), will be scheduled.

I. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

1. The Committee on Accreditation requires that institutions apply for, and obtain, COA approval of any substantive change before the change is included in the scope of accreditation or candidacy previously granted to the institution. Approval is based on evidence that the proposed change will not adversely affect the capacity of the institution/program to continue to meet the Standards. Note that some changes require site or virtual visits in addition to submission of the appropriate application forms and fee. Application forms are available via the ABFSE website in Appendix K of the Manual.
2. Changes that significantly impact the financial stability or enrollments of an institution/program, receipt of more than three (3) applications at one time, or any other changes that affect the institution's ability to comply with the Standards will result in the need for a comprehensive evaluation. COA will consider substantive change applications on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a comprehensive evaluation is appropriate.
3. Substantive change includes the following types of changes:
 - (i) any change in the established mission or program learning outcomes of the institution or program.
 - (ii) any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution or program (site visit required).
 - (iii) the addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in either content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution or program (site visit required). This description applies when an accredited program expands distance education offerings to fifty percent (50%) or more. (See Appendix E) and any change between semester credit hours and quarter credit hours.
 - (iv) the addition of accredited courses or programs at a degree or credential level different than that which is included in the institution's or program's current accreditation or candidacy (site visit required).
 - (v) a twenty five percent (25%) or more increase in the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program (site visit required).
 - (vi) A change in the legal name of the institution or program.
 - (vii) A change in the program director or a change of sixty percent (60%) or more of the core faculty within one year.
 - (viii) Relocation of the institution's or program's permanent instructional site (site visit required).
 - (ix) The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution (site visit required).

- (x) The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution or program is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study (site visit required).
- (xi) the establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution or program offers at least fifty percent (50%) of an educational program.

See Appendix K for Substantive Change Application forms.

The following substantive changes (xii-xvi) apply to institutions whose recognition by the COA allows them to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA program (i.e. ABFSE serves as gatekeeper)

- (xii) If the institution enters into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers more than twenty-five percent (25%) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs (site visit required).
- (xiii) If the institution seeks to establish an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least fifty percent (50%) of an educational program, the addition of such a location must be approved by the COA. The institution has must provide satisfactory evidence of a system to ensure quality across a distributed enterprise that includes:
- a) Clearly identified academic control;
 - b) Regular evaluation of the locations;
 - c) Adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems;
 - d) Financial stability;
 - e) Programmatic assessment and
 - f) Long-range planning for expansion
- (xiv) The COA procedure for approval of an additional location requires timely reporting to the COA of every additional location.
- (xv) The COA will not approve an institution's addition of locations after the institution undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control until the institution demonstrates that it meets the conditions for the COA to approve additional locations described in this section.
- (xvi) The COA will conduct visits to additional locations during the normal period of accreditation.
4. Certain substantive changes require a comprehensive evaluation, site visit, or other action. These changes include when an institution:
- a. establishes one (1) or more branch campus programs (see also Section I.2 of Chapter X (page 10-4)
 - b. changes sponsorship to the extent that it likely will affect a program's continued compliance with the Standards for Accreditation and the related provisions of The Manual (see Section D-1 of Chapter VIII).
 - c. adds a new or additional funeral service program or curriculum (see also Section D-1-e of Chapter VIII)
 - d. makes a substantive change that places an institution in violation of one or more Standards (See Section H of Chapter VIII).
5. The COA reserves the right to require a comprehensive evaluation (i.e. Self study and site visit) at any time it believes there may be a violation one or more accreditation Standards (Section H of Chapter VIII).

Determination of whether a comprehensive evaluation is appropriate will be made using the following procedure. Within ten business days of the notice of substantive change, the COA staff shall advise the institution whether in the staff's opinion a site visit, a comprehensive evaluation, or other action may be appropriate. The institution shall be given ten days to respond to the staff's determination. At the end of those ten (10) business days, the COA shall review the institution's request for substantive change, the

staff's analysis, and the institution's response to the staff's analysis.

Within ten (10) business days of that review, the COA shall determine if a site visit or other action is appropriate. If it so determines, that action shall normally occur within thirty (30) days unless, in consultation with the institution, the COA determines a longer period of time, not to exceed six (6) months, is appropriate. In instances where the COA has determined a comprehensive evaluation (which would likely include a Self study and related materials as well as a site visit) is appropriate, the timeline shall be established by the COA in consultation with the institution. In such cases, the comprehensive evaluation shall occur within six (6) months.

The COA will generally designate the date of its formal action as the effective date of any substantive change. When there is good and obvious reason for a later date, the later date will be used as the effective date. The date will not be retroactive other than in the case where a change in ownership occurs within thirty (30) days prior to the COA's action. In such case, the COA may establish the effective date to coincide with the change in ownership.

6. When the COA's accreditation of an institution enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA programs, the COA's procedures for the approval of an additional location described in this section will be contingent upon the institution's demonstration that it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to operate the additional location. In addition, the COA's procedures will include:

- a. a visit, within six (6) months, to each additional location the institution establishes, if the institution-
 - (i) has a total of three (3) or fewer additional locations;
 - (ii) has not demonstrated, to the COA's satisfaction, that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations; or
 - (iii) has been placed on warning, probation, or show cause by the COA or is subject to some limitation by the COA on its accreditation or pre-accreditation status.
- b. The COA's accreditation activities will include visits to additional locations of institutions that operate more than three (3) additional locations using the same schedule as visits to the primary location, although more frequent visits may be scheduled if the COA determines it appropriate to do so; and
- c. The COA may include special visits to additional locations to ensure that accredited and preaccredited institutions that experience rapid growth in the number of additional locations maintain educational quality.
- d. The purposes of the visits described in this section include verifying that all additional locations have the personnel, facilities, and resources indicated in the institution's application for approval of the locations.

J. THIRD PARTY COMMENT

The Committee on Accreditation publishes in its directory of accredited programs the date of the most recent and the date of the next comprehensive review for each program. The Directory of Accredited Programs carries an invitation to any interested third parties to submit to the Committee on Accreditation written comments on any program's qualifications for accreditation or pre-accreditation prior to its next comprehensive review. The COA shall consider any input received during its program review.

K. NEW FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR REVIEW IN AN ADVERSE ACTION

Before the COA reaches a final adverse action decision, an institution or program may, seek review of new financial information if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The financial information was unavailable to the institution or program until after the decision subject to appeal was made.

2. The financial information is significant and bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the COA. The criteria of significance and materiality will be determined by the COA on the basis of information provided by the program or institution.
3. The only remaining deficiency cited by the agency in support of a final adverse action decision is the institution's or program's failure to meet an agency standard pertaining to finances.

An institution or program may seek the review of new financial information described above only once and any determination by the COA made with respect to that review does not provide a basis for an appeal.

CHAPTER IX

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

(New Standards effective January 1, 2020)

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

STANDARD 1: STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, and ADMINISTRATION

STANDARD 2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

STANDARD 3: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 4: FINANCE

STANDARD 5: CURRICULUM

STANDARD 6: FACULTY

STANDARD 7: FACILITIES

STANDARD 8: LIBRARY / LEARNING RESOURCES

STANDARD 9: STUDENTS

STANDARD 10: PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

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

STANDARD 12: PROGRAM LENGTH, TUITION, AND FEES MUST RELATE TO SUBJECT MATTER

STANDARD 13: PROGRAM LENGTH IN CREDIT HOURS

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

CHAPTER IX

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

(Standards effective January 1, 2025)

STANDARD 1: STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, and ADMINISTRATION

STANDARD 2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

STANDARD 3: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 4: FINANCE

STANDARD 5: CURRICULUM

STANDARD 6: FACULTY

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COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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 Standard 13).
 - 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 one (1) student representative
 - 1.4.1.c at least one (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
2 1.9 The funeral service education program must be administered as follows:
3 1.9.1 A single purpose institution must be administered by a chief administrative officer, directly
4 accountable only to the governing board for the management of the institution. All other employees
5 must report directly, or indirectly, to this chief administrative officer.
6 1.9.1.a This officer may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced
7 to reflect administrative duties.
8 1.9.2 Each program must have a program director (or comparable title) meeting the following
9 1.9.2.a must be a full-time employee of the institution.
10 1.9.2.b must be primarily responsible for the operation, supervision, evaluation and revision of the
11 program.
12 1.9.2.c must be a graduate of an ABFSE accredited program.
13 1.9.2.d must possess a valid license to practice as a funeral service professional.
14 1.9.2.e must possess an academic background consistent with the position of leadership held.
15 1.9.2.e.i. This will always involve a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited
16 college or university. If a Program Director starts in the position without a
17 master's degree, the degree must be earned within five years of the date of the
18 initial full-time appointment in funeral service education.
19 1.9.2.e.ii. For program directors earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the
20 United States, the institution awarding the degree must have fulfilled
21 governmental standards which in the judgment of American Association of
22 Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) are acceptable or
23 similar to those of the ABFSE.
24 1.9.2.f Program Director may also be a member of the teaching faculty as long as the teaching load
25 is reduced to reflect administrative duties.
26
27

28 **STANDARD 2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- 29
30 2.1 The mission of an ABFSE-accredited program must be to educate students in every phase of funeral service so
31 that program graduates are prepared for entry-level employment in funeral service. In support of this mission,
32 a program must adopt at least the following Learning Outcomes:
33

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

- 35 2.1.1 Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families
36 and communities they serve.
37 2.1.2 Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
38 2.1.3 Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance.
39 2.1.4 Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains.
40 2.1.5 Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation
41 and handling of human remains.
42 2.1.6 Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and
43 ceremonies.
44 2.1.7 Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final
45 disposition of human remains.
46 2.1.8 Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
47 2.1.9 Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
48 2.1.10 Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service
49 practice.
50

- 51 2.2 These Program Learning Outcomes must be published on the program website and in the program handbook.
52

53 **STANDARD 3: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

- 54
55 3.1 Each institution and program must conduct their business and academic activities in an ethical manner. In this
56 regard, each institution program must
57 3.1.1 publish and adhere to a personnel policy assuring equal employment opportunity for all qualified
58 persons.

- 1 3.1.2 maintain admissions, financial aid, and education services policies for students assuring equal
2 consideration without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or
3 veterans status and other protected classes pursuant to federal law.
- 4 3.1.3 ensure that website/catalog accurately portray the realities of the program and institution so that
5 students can make informed decisions before admissions. Advertising and marketing materials must
6 include a link to the website/catalog.
- 7 3.1.3.a Each institution must publish curriculum and program of study information including:
8 3.1.3.a.i course names and identification numbers;
9 3.1.3.a.ii summary descriptions and credit hours;
10 3.1.3.a.iii requirements for admission;
11 3.1.3.a.iv requirements and processes for withdrawal and graduation;
12 3.1.3.a.v academic calendars;
13 3.1.3.a.vi policy regarding changes in modality of course offerings;
14 3.1.3.a.vii grading policies;
15 3.1.3.a.viii financial policies for tuition, fees, and refunds.
16 3.1.3.a.ix information about the potential challenges of distance education
17 3.1.3.a.x information regarding on-campus requirements for distance education
18 3.1.3.a.xi technology requirements
19 3.1.3.a.xii protocols used to verify student identity
- 20 3.1.4. The institution must maintain proper records and reports as follows:
21 3.1.4.a Secure filing systems for student academic records must exist and policies must be in place
22 to ensure maintenance of these records in perpetuity.
23 3.1.4.b Program records, such as clinical reports, surveys, affiliation agreements and accreditation-
24 related documents must be organized and maintained from the date of the last comprehensive
25 review. Institutional oversight and procedures must be in place to ensure maintenance and
26 continuity of these records when personnel changes take place.
27 3.1.4.c Student academic transcripts must indicate the quality of the student's work in each course
28 and the extent of each course, expressed in either semester or quarter credits. Grading
29 systems must be explained on the transcript.
- 30 3.1.5. In the event a program ceases to function, a plan must be in place to ensure maintenance of student
31 academic records in perpetuity.
- 32
- 33 3.2 Any reference by a program to accreditation in catalogs, bulletins, or other official publications and
34 communication or other media must read as follows:
35
- 36 Programs in a multi-purpose institution will use:
37 The (name of the accredited degree program) at (name of sponsoring institution) is accredited by the American
38 Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097
39 (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org
40
- 41 When ABFSE serves as 'gatekeeper' for the single purpose institution the statement should read: (name of
42 sponsoring institution) and the (name of the accredited degree program) are accredited by the American Board
43 of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097 (816) 233-
44 3747. Web: www.abfse.org
45
- 46 NOTE: The reference to accreditation must name the specific program accredited by the ABFSE. If the
47 institution offers more than one degree (or its equivalent) program accredited by ABFSE, the names
48 of all accredited programs must appear in the accreditation statement. (This requirement is particularly
49 important in those institutions offering other areas of instruction which are not accredited, or eligible
50 for accreditation, by the ABFSE.)
51
- 52 3.3 ABFSE accredited institutions or programs which choose to offer unaccredited programs, in addition to one or
53 more accredited programs, must comply with the following procedures:
54 3.3.1 Publications describing the unaccredited program must contain the following information:
55 "This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited
56 by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program will not
57 have the academic credential for licensure in states where graduation from an ABFSE accredited
58 program is required."

- 1 3.3.2 In addition, the academic transcript for graduates of unaccredited programs must carry the statement:
2 "This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited
3 by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program will
4 not have the academic credential for licensure in states where graduation from an ABFSE accredited
5 program is required."
6 3.3.3 The requirements of Standard 3.3 do not apply to a bachelor degree completion program which
7 requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program as a condition for admission.
8
9 3.4 Published policies must exist which ensure due process for students, faculty, and staff, including grievance
10 procedures, clearly defined disciplinary policies, and sexual harassment policies.
11 3.4.1 All written student complaints about the program that follow the institution's or other governing
12 entity's stated procedure must be available for review.
13 3.4.2 The program must file a written response or demonstrate resolution of complaints that have been
14 received.
15 3.4.3 Written student complaints are to be reported on the Annual Report.
16
17 3.5 Honesty and integrity are required of all accredited programs and each program will conduct itself in an ethical
18 manner. Violations of ethics include, but are not limited to:
19 3.5.1 Providing false, misleading, or distorted information directly or by omission to the ABFSE or
20 Committee of Accreditation (COA);
21 3.5.2 Engaging in illegal conduct;
22 3.5.3 Presenting false information to students, faculty, staff or the public;
23 3.5.4 Engaging in intentional conduct that is coercive to students or prejudicial to student learning or
24 outcomes
25 3.5.5 Any other conduct that is generally regarded as unethical in higher education, accreditation of
26 educational programs and institutions, or funeral service.
27
28 3.6 See also Standards 4, 6.3, 9.1, and 11 for additional topics subject to Administrative Practices and Ethical
29 Standards.
30
31

32 **STANDARD 4: FINANCE**

- 33
34 4.1 The institution/program must have sustainable and sufficient financial resources to provide instruction and
35 facilities in compliance with this manual.
36
37 4.2 The program must have resources budgeted on a continuing basis that are sufficient to provide instruction,
38 current technology, equipment, student and academic support in compliance with this manual's standards.
39
40 4.3 The institution must have processes in place to address unexpected expenditures.
41
42 4.4 The Executive Director of the ABFSE must be notified of any unexpected expenditures or revenue shortfalls
43 that might impact instruction or compliance with this manual's standards.
44
45 4.5 A program in a multiple-purpose institution must have program level involvement in the budget development
46 process.
47
48 4.6 The institution must employ acceptable accounting practices and must provide the most current audited
49 financial statements. Any audit exceptions or advisories that appear in the most recent audit must be reported
50 to the Executive Director of the ABFSE.
51
52 4.7 Institutions for whom the ABFSE acts as gatekeeper :
53 4.7.1 must demonstrate a ratio of current assets to current liabilities that is at least 1:1 for the most recent
54 fiscal year.
55 4.7.2 must maintain copies of all education-related contracts in force since the last comprehensive review.
56 4.7.3 The financial accounting system for gatekeeper institutions may not be combined with the financial
57 affairs of any other organizations.
58

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 (2) 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 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 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 3 minimum semester (4 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve distribution of study in the following content areas:
- 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 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. 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 Arrangement Conferences. If done in a simulation setting, no more than 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.vii 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 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.
 - 5.6.3 Instruction must be at a level generally held commensurate with postsecondary education at the bachelor degree level and directed toward the individual growth of each student encouraging critical thinking and requiring student use of multiple learning resources reflecting a variety of points of view.
 - 5.6.4 Thirty percent (30%) (minimum of 40 semester credits or equivalent) of the bachelor program must consist of upper division coursework (including the major and general education). The academic credit awarded for upper division courses within baccalaureate degree programs must be clearly distinguished from that of lower division courses via Form B-7.
 - 5.6.5 At least thirty (30) semester credits (or equivalent) of general education are required (25%), including at least nine (9) semester credits (or equivalent) of upper division general education coursework.

STANDARD 6: FACULTY

- 6.1 Members of the teaching faculty must meet certain degree and professional requirements in order to be deemed qualified faculty members:
 - 6.1.1 All full-time or part-time faculty must have a bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
 - 6.1.2 All newly and re-appointed full-time faculty must earn a master's degree or higher from a regionally

- 1 accredited college or university within five years of their initial appointment date. Faculty who fail
2 to meet the five-year requirement are not allowed to teach in any ABFSE accredited program until
3 the degree is awarded. For faculty earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United
4 States, the institution awarding the degree must have met degree standards which in the judgment of
5 AACRAO are acceptable or similar to those of ABFSE.
- 6 6.1.3 Degrees must be documented by official transcripts.
- 7 6.1.4 Qualified faculty members who teach embalming, funeral directing, or restorative art courses must be
8 graduates of an ABFSE-accredited program. If the faculty member graduated from a funeral service
9 program outside the United States, the program must have academic requirements and standards
10 equivalent to an ABFSE-accredited program. The following additional requirements must also be
11 met:
- 12 6.1.4.a a faculty member teaching embalming must have sufficient training to enable proper
13 instruction, have at least one year of embalming experience, and be a licensed embalmer
14 where required by law. Clinical embalming instructors must be licensed in the state where
15 they teach (where required by law).
- 16 6.1.4.b a faculty member teaching funeral directing, merchandising or funeral service management
17 must have sufficient training and experience in funeral service practice to enable proper
18 instruction, and be licensed to practice funeral directing where required by law;
- 19 6.1.4.c a faculty member teaching restorative art must have sufficient training and experience to
20 enable proper instruction, and be licensed to practice embalming where required by law;
- 21 6.1.4.d a faculty member teaching other required or elective courses must have sufficient
22 specialized education or experience in these subjects to enable proper instruction.
- 23
- 24 6.2 All personnel serving as off-campus preceptors must be licensed to practice funeral directing, embalming or
25 both where required by law. Preceptors must be graduates of ABFSE accredited programs. If the preceptor
26 graduated from a funeral service program outside the United States, the program must have academic
27 requirements and standards equivalent to an ABFSE accredited program.
- 28 6.2.1 Preceptor credentials must be verified by the program in one of the following ways:
- 29 6.2.1.a Have on file an official transcript from the ABFSE accredited funeral service program from
30 which the preceptor graduated plus a copy of the preceptor's state license where required by
31 law;
- 32 6.2.1.b If the state requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program, have on file a copy of
33 the preceptor's license from the state licensing authority.
- 34 6.2.1.c Have on file a copy of (or be able to provide access to) verification from the State web site
35 that the preceptor has a current license in good standing (if the state requires graduation from
36 an ABFSE accredited program).
- 37 6.2.2 If preceptors are used, there must be an identified certification process in place and formal
38 documentation that each preceptor has been properly oriented about the school's requirements
39 concerning knowledge base, competency, and evaluation of student procedures and criteria.
- 40
- 41 6.3 All faculty and staff must adhere to ethical practices in student-related matters.
- 42
- 43 6.4 Faculty development opportunities must be available for all modes of instruction.
- 44 6.4.1 The program must provide evidence of training for faculty without prior teaching experience.
- 45 6.4.2 Ongoing professional development for faculty must be available. Such opportunities must consider
46 professional development for teaching and continuing education for maintaining licensure.
- 47 6.4.3 The program must provide evidence of training for faculty teaching distance education courses who
48 do not have prior distance teaching experience.
- 49 6.4.4 The institution offering distance education must provide evidence that faculty have access to periodic
50 distance-focused faculty development as technology and best practices for e-learning evolve.
- 51
- 52 6.5 Faculty must be involved in maintaining the academic program including standards pertaining to instruction.
- 53
- 54 6.6 The institution must provide instructional support for faculty, including library access, office facilities,
55 technological resources, and involvement in program planning and assessment.
- 56
- 57 6.7 Student-teacher ratios must be available for review and must not exceed 30:1 overall (full-time equivalent per
58 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 and Learning Resources

- 8.1 Learning resources, whether physical or electronic, must be both sufficient in scope and readily accessible to

- 1 students to provide adequate support to the accredited program.
- 2
- 3 8.2. To the extent quality and availability affect program outcomes, learning resources that reflect a variety of points
- 4 of view must be readily accessible to all students.
- 5
- 6 8.3 To the extent quality and availability affect program outcomes, learning resources must be accessible to
- 7 students outside of regular classroom hours. The program must require student utilization of these resources
- 8 as described in institutional and program publications.
- 9 8.3.1 A written acquisition policy relevant to funeral service education must be in place and the program
- 10 director and faculty must be involved with the annual acquisitions related to this program.
- 11 8.3.2 Sufficient space must be devoted to learning resources to provide for the needs of students in funeral
- 12 service and must be accessible during reasonable hours and administered by qualified staff.
- 13 8.3.3 Learning resources must be catalogued according to a recognized standard method.
- 14
- 15 8.4 There must be in place an orientation for students regarding use of the available learning resources including
- 16 use of the Internet, how to access course materials and how to access technological support.
- 17
- 18

19 STANDARD 9: STUDENTS

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- 21 9.1 Ethical Practices:
- 22 9.1.1 A program must adopt and enforce ethical practices recognized in higher education in all student-
- 23 related matters. These practices include, but are not limited to:
- 24 9.1.1.a presentation of clear and accurate information about the program;
- 25 9.1.1.b student rights, responsibilities and processes;
- 26 9.1.1.c program requirements;
- 27 9.1.1.d a statement regarding program adherence to ethical practices in student-related matters must
- 28 be published in program informational materials;
- 29 9.1.2 All student policies and regulations must be equally applied to all students.
- 30
- 31 9.2 Admissions:
- 32 9.2.1 Admissions requirements must be publicly stated in institutional publications including the catalog
- 33 and must be administered as published.
- 34 9.2.2 The minimum educational requirement for admission to a program is:
- 35 9.2.2.a graduation from an accredited four-year high school or its recognized equivalent, or
- 36 9.2.2.b a minimum of nine (9) semester hours (or the equivalent) of post-secondary coursework
- 37 exclusive of developmental courses from a regionally accredited institution and a minimum
- 38 2.0 grade point average.
- 39 9.2.3 A student shall not be enrolled in a program until evidence is supplied that Standard 9.2 has been
- 40 satisfied. Such evidence must be:
- 41 9.2.3.a Official transcript of high school or college credit, received directly from the institution
- 42 from which the credits were received or from a nationally recognized provider of electronic
- 43 transcripts or
- 44 9.2.3.b Evidence that the applicant has a recognized credential equivalent to the high school
- 45 diploma. A credential must be certified by an authorized official of a recognized high school,
- 46 the state department of education or its equivalent, or
- 47 9.2.3.c Evidence that the applicant has fulfilled the requirements of state law for recognition of high
- 48 school completion or its equivalent in the jurisdiction where the student resided at the time
- 49 of completion.
- 50 9.2.3.d In the case of applicants from outside the United States, a statement from a recognized
- 51 education authority certifying that the applicant has completed formal educational
- 52 requirements at least equivalent to high school graduation in the United States.
- 53 9.2.3.e In the case of applicants from outside the United States, a statement from a recognized
- 54 education authority certifying that the applicant has completed formal educational
- 55 requirements at least equivalent to high school graduation in the United States.
- 56 9.2.4 Transfer credit policies must be published and available to students and the public. These policies
- 57 must include the criteria for the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.
- 58 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 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 service.

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 years and three 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 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 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 (2) consecutive years of sub-standard graduation/retention rates: Probation.

10.5.2.b three (3) 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)

10.6.1 A program with a single year employment rate below 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%) 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 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

(Single-purpose, funeral service institutions, for which ABFSE serves as 'gatekeeper' in order to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must address this standard.)

- 1
2 11.1 Single purpose institutions for which the ABFSE serves as “gatekeeper” must also demonstrate compliance
3 with all obligations under Title IV, including results of compliance audits and program reviews. (See Appendix
4 F)
5
6 11.2 Recognizing the primary role of financial aid auditors to ensure compliance with Title IV, COA will limit their
7 review under this standard to the following:
8 11.2.1 Examination of the most recent three (3) years of financial aid audits, including any audit exceptions.
9 11.2.2 Default Rates for the Title IV Student Loan Program for the years since the last accreditation review,
10 as reported to the college by the U. S. Department of Education.
11 11.2.2.a for institutions in which most recent rates are above the federal guidelines, plans to bring
12 rates into compliance must be reported to the ABFSE office.
13 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
14 most recent financial aid composite score will be attached to the Annual Report each year to be
15 reviewed by a sub-committee of the COA.
16
17 11.3 Any adverse communications relative to Title IV eligibility must be reported to the ABFSE office in a timely
18 manner (within 30 days of receipt).
19 11.3.1 Non-compliance with Title IV obligations will be considered in ABFSE accreditation decisions.
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21

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

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24 (Single-purpose, funeral service institutions, for which ABFSE serves as ‘gatekeeper’ in order to participate in Title IV
25 Higher Education Act programs, must address this standard.)
26

- 27 12.1 The institution must provide evidence of how credit hours are measured/calculated and how the program’s
28 hours are distributed by term. This should be done for on campus as well as distance education programs. (See
29 Appendix Z)
30
31 12.2. The institution must demonstrate that the subject matter taught relates reasonably to tuition and fees charged
32 and to length of the program. Documentation must include length of program(s) and the number of hours and
33 the corresponding tuition and fees for each program.
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CHAPTER X

POLICIES

A. GENERAL POLICIES.

Funeral service practitioners are licensed because funeral service involves significant considerations of public health, both as it relates to the proper disposition of human remains and to the counseling of bereaved persons. Accordingly, programs of education relating thereto must maintain as high a standard of excellence as possible in the light of existing knowledge.

The COA encourages each program to develop and implement experimental programs designed to expand and improve the professional education of its students.

The COA will, upon request, assist individual institutions to secure an educational consultant to advise in matters pertaining to Standards for Accreditation. The expenses incurred shall be paid by the requesting program.

B. DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the obligation of every program applying for candidacy, extension of candidacy, accreditation, annual renewal, or continuing accreditation to provide the Committee on Accreditation access to all parts of its operations with due regard for the rights of individual privacy and with complete and accurate information with respect to the institution's affairs, including reports from other accrediting, licensing, and auditing agencies. Failure to do so, or to make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure, is sufficient reason in and of itself to deny or revoke candidacy or accreditation.

The Committee on Accreditation will maintain inviolate the confidentiality of information supplied by the program except in those cases where it is deemed necessary by the American Board to make public information which forms a substantive basis for the committee's decision.

The COA will announce publicly, as appropriate, through its Executive Director, the fact an institution's and/or program's

1. candidacy or accreditation has been approved;
2. candidacy has been extended or its accreditation renewed;
3. candidacy has not been renewed or its accreditation has been terminated;
4. has been placed on probation and the reasons therefore;
5. has been given a show cause order effective at a specific date and the reasons therefore;
6. application for candidacy or accreditation has been denied.

If a program so conducts its affairs that it becomes a matter of public concern, the COA may announce, through its Executive Director, any action the Committee on Accreditation has taken and the basis for that action, making public any pertinent information available to the COA.

C. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Real as well as perceived conflicts will be avoided.

1. Selection of Site Visitors:

- a. No individual who has served as consultant to a program may serve as a site visitor to that program.
- b. No personnel from programs potentially in direct competition with the program being evaluated may serve on the site visit team.

- c. No recent (within 5 years) graduate nor recent faculty member (within 5 years) of the program being evaluated may serve on the site visit team.
 - d. No faculty members or practitioners from within the same state in which the evaluated program is located may serve on the site visit team.
 - e. No faculty member from within institutions in the same systems as the program being evaluated may serve on the site visit team.
 - f. Except for focused visits, no member of the Committee on Accreditation or the ABFSE chairperson may serve on the site visit team.
2. Site Visit Behavior: Site visitors are prohibited from using the site visit as either an employment opportunity for themselves or to hire faculty away from the program being evaluated.
 3. Voting by Committee on Accreditation Members: Members must abstain from voting and from the discussion if they have a real or perceived Conflict of Interest. Committee members from within the state of the program being evaluated may not make motions, participate in the discussion, or vote concerning that program. Committee members employed by the program being evaluated or any other program within the same educational system must absent themselves during the executive session and voting concerning that program.
 4. Persons serving as consultants, administrative staff, or in any other way serving the committee shall avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest and shall follow all policies listed in #1-3 above. Members of the Committee on Accreditation, site visit teams and employees of the ABFSE will be expected to sign a Conflict of Interest statement. (See Appendix G)

D. REFERENCE TO ACCREDITATION STATUS BY A PROGRAM

1. Any reference by a program to accreditation in catalogs, bulletins or other official publications and communication or other media shall read as follows:

“The (name of accredited degree 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.”

Please note that the reference to accreditation names the specific program accredited by the ABFSE; this requirement is particularly important in those institutions engaged in other areas of instruction which are not accredited by, or eligible for accreditation by, the ABFSE.

Institutions accredited by ABFSE (for Title IV eligibility) will use the following accreditation statement:

“(Name of sponsoring institution) and the (name of accredited degree program) are 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.”

2. ABFSE accredited institutions/departments which choose to offer, in addition to accredited programs, unaccredited programs, must comply with the following procedures:
 - a. 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.”
 - b. The academic transcript for graduates of an unaccredited program must carry 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.”

- 1 E. PROTECTION OF STUDENTS: Students matriculated in an accredited program which loses its accreditation
2 status prior to their graduation are still considered graduates of an accredited program.
3
- 4 F. REVISIONS OF THE ACCREDITATION AND POLICY MANUAL AND STANDARDS: Recognizing that
5 the funeral service profession is continuously evolving, periodic review of ABFSE policies, procedures, and
6 Accreditation Standards is an on-going process.
7
- 8 1. The Committee on Accreditation (COA) is responsible for all policies related to Accreditation, including
9 Standards, accreditation process, accreditation procedures, accreditation policies, and granting or taking
10 other actions regarding Candidacy and Accreditation.
11
 - 12 2. Although it may review them at any time, the Committee on Accreditation will review the Standards of
13 Accreditation at least once every five (5) years. Standards are constantly monitored using information
14 provided from the indices listed in #6 below. If the COA determines at any point during its systematic
15 program of review that it needs to make changes to its Standards, the Committee will initiate action within
16 12 months and make the changes within a reasonable period of time (normally six months). The formal
17 review of the Standards every five (5) years will follow the process outlined in Appendix H of The Manual.
18
 - 19 3. For any changes in the Standards of Accreditation or other policies or procedures related to accreditation
20 (including but not limited to the formal five-year review), the COA will provide advance notice to allow
21 interested parties opportunity to comment on the proposed changes prior to their adoption. To ensure
22 opportunity for broad input, the process to ensure broad review will follow the guidelines in items 3, 4, and
23 5 of Appendix H of The Manual.
24
 - 25 4. Other, non-accreditation, ABFSE policies are to be voted upon by the American Board—and must be
26 submitted to all members at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which the proposal will be considered.
27 Submission will be in the form of a Notice of Motion.
28
 - 29 5. The Notice of Motion proposing a change to any non-accreditation policy shall require two thirds vote of
30 members present at an official meeting of the ABFSE and, if passed, shall become effective upon passage
31 unless otherwise directed by the board.
32
 - 33 6. The Committee on Accreditation uses several indices to ensure that the Standards of Accreditation are valid,
34 current, consistent, and relevant indicators of the quality of the education needed for entry into the funeral
35 service profession. Among the indices used are
36
 - 37 a. annual reports from each program providing information on demographics, attrition, and program
38 changes;
39
 - 40 b. on-going liaison with the Curriculum Committee which ensures that the required curricula include all
41 areas tested by the National Board Examination, which, itself, is based on task analyses provided by
42 practitioners in the field;
43
 - 44 c. Introspective analysis by the Committee (to ensure its application of Standards is consistent.
45
- 46 G. WAIVER AUTHORITY: The Committee on Accreditation may waive policies related to accreditation as
47 contained in this Manual when, in its opinion, unusual or compelling reasons supporting such waiver exist.
48
- 49 H. PUBLICATION OF INACCURATE INFORMATION: In the event an ABFSE accredited program or its
50 sponsoring institution, publishes or otherwise disseminates information that misrepresents or distorts action taken
51 by the Committee on Accreditation with respect to the accreditation process or status of the program, the
52 following will occur:
53
- 54 The administrative officer of the sponsoring institution and the director of the funeral service program will be
55 notified in writing of the misrepresentation or distortion and will be asked to take corrective action in writing
56 regarding the misrepresentation or distortion.
57
58
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Should the sponsoring institution and/or the funeral service program fail to take prompt corrective action, the Committee on Accreditation may publish a statement providing correct information to appropriate publics which will appear in the ABFSE website and in whatever other forms deemed appropriate by the Committee.

I. BRANCH CAMPUS PROGRAMS: If an accredited funeral service **institution** intends to establish a branch campus, it is required to submit a business plan for the proposed branch in the form of a Self study.

1. As defined in the Federal Register 34 CFR 600.2, Branch Campus is a location of an institution or program that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution or program. Such a location is permanent in nature, offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

The COA will consider as a “branch campus” for purposes of this and all other Standards any off-campus location of the program at which at least 50% of the educational program is offered. Each branch campus (or other location as noted herein) must meet all ABFSE/COA Standards of Accreditation as if it were a separate campus in and of itself.

See the discussion in Section I of Chapter VIII regarding Substantive Changes.

2. Institutions planning to establish a new Branch Campus must
 - a. submit a complete Self study for the Branch campus, following all required ABFSE guidelines;
 - b. within six months of the establishment of a Branch Campus program host a site visit. Cost of the visit is to be borne by the institution.
3. Once accreditation has been extended, each Branch Campus will be visited as an integral part of each accreditation comprehensive review and each must be included in all ABFSE Standards of Accreditation in the Self study.

J. TEACH-OUT PLANS AND AGREEMENTS

1. The COA requires that an institution it accredits or grants candidacy to submit a teach-out plan to the COA for approval upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
 - (i) The United States Department of Education’s Secretary notifies the COA that the Secretary has initiated an emergency action against an institution, in accordance with Section 487(c)(1)(G) of the HEA, or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program, in accordance with Section 487(c)(1)(F) of the HEA, and that a teach-out plan is required.
 - (ii) The COA acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation or candidacy status of the institution.
 - (iii) The institution notifies the COA that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program.
 - (iv) A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies the COA that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.
2. The COA will evaluate the teach-out plan to ensure it provides for the equitable treatment of students under criteria indicated in this section, specifies additional charges, if any, and provides for notification to the students of any additional charges.

The COA requires that an institution it accredits or has granted candidacy to, which enters into a teach-out agreement either on its own or at the request of the COA must submit that teach-out agreement to the COA for approval. The COA may approve the teach-out agreement only if the agreement is between institutions that are regionally or nationally accredited is consistent with applicable standards and regulations, and provides for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring that—

- (i) The teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to
- (A) Provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the institution that is ceasing operations either entirely or at one of its locations; and
- (B) Remain stable, carry out its mission, and meet all obligations to existing students; and
- (ii) The teach-out institution demonstrates that it can provide students with access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances and that it will provide students with information about additional charges, if any.

Closed Institutions. If an institution the COA accredits or has granted candidacy to closes without a teach-out plan or agreement, the COA will work with the United States Department of Education and the appropriate State agency, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge.

Finally, the COA may require that an institution it accredits or has granted candidacy to enter into a teach-out agreement as part of its teach-out plan. Whether such a requirement is put in force will be determined on a case by case basis with due consideration to practicality, cost, feasibility, and likely effectiveness of such a plan.

K. CONTINUITY OF ABFSE OPERATIONS

The ABFSE realizes that continuity of operations in the event of incapacitation of the Executive Director is vital. In order to provide such continuity, it has an agreement with an individual who is trained in all ABFSE operations.

This individual is prepared to take over temporarily in the event of the incapacitation of the Executive Director. This individual would assume all duties of the Executive Director if such became necessary; would immediately take over all operations of the ABFSE office to ensure total continuity of operations; would be titled Interim Executive Director; and would serve in this capacity until a permanent successor is identified by the ABFSE.

- L. FILE MAINTENANCE: For each accredited program the ABFSE office shall maintain on file at least the last two full accreditation and/or pre-accreditation reviews. This shall include the last two committee decisions, periodic review reports, if any, institutional responses to reports, special reviews, if any, responses to stipulations, if any, and committee final actions. The file shall also contain the most recent Self study Report. In addition, the written record of all decisions made throughout an institution's or program's affiliation with the COA regarding its candidacy, accreditation, and any substantive changes -- including all correspondence that is significantly related to those decisions -- will be maintained by the ABFSE office. ABFSE Document Retention and Destruction Policy is found in Appendix L.

- M. COLLECTION OF DEFAULT RATES: Accredited institutions for which the ABFSE serves as primary accreditor ('gatekeeper'; single purpose, stand alone, non-regionally accredited funeral service colleges) must submit, along with the annual report, default rate for USDE Title IV programs. The committee will take appropriate action thereupon at their next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting if the default rates warrant immediate action.

- N. COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION: When a written complaint is filed with the ABFSE office or the COA related to the Standards or procedures, the following actions will be taken:

1. the complainant will be notified within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint and the fact that the COA will review the complaint and respond to complainant within thirty (30) days;
2. the COA will meet to review the complaint within thirty (30) days of the acknowledgement to complainant;
3. after the committee meeting, the complainant will be notified of the result(s) and will also be notified of the opportunity for appeal or further input to the committee, as appropriate. This notice to complainant will be sent within ten (10) days after the COA meeting at which the complaint was discussed;

4. if the complaint is unable to be resolved in a manner considered satisfactory by the complainant, the complainant may appeal the committee action to the ABFSE Executive Committee for independent review. Complainant has 30 days from receipt of the committee's decision to file this appeal;
 5. upon receipt of such appeal, complainant will be notified that the ABFSE Executive Committee will review the committee's decision and respond to the appeal within 30 days;
 6. the Executive Committee will prepare a report and recommendation to the Committee on Accreditation for its consideration. A copy will be provided to the complainant;
 7. the COA will meet to review the report and recommendation of the Executive Committee within 30 days of the receipt of the report and to make a final decision on the complaint; and
 8. the decision of the ABFSE Committee on Accreditation is final.
- O. **DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES.** The Directory of Officers will include the following information about each officer listed:
1. Full name
 2. Academic qualifications
 3. Professional qualifications
 4. Employment affiliation
 5. Organizational affiliations
- The Directory of Committees will include:
1. Full Name
 2. Employment or Association affiliation
 3. Contact info with email
- P. **PROCESS FOR APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE COA.** Also see APPENDIX B.
- When the term of any member of the Committee on Accreditation is set to expire, the Executive Director will notify the appropriate constituency of the pending vacancy 12 months in advance.
- 1a. Educators Representing Public and Private Institutions: The Executive Director will send a notice to all accredited institutions and programs when an educator seat on the Committee on Accreditation will be or is vacant. The notice will specify whether the position was filled by a representative from a private or public institution. The College and University Council will nominate three (3) qualified individuals for each open seat on the Committee on Accreditation. Consistent with Section A.2 of Article VI of the By-laws, the COA shall select the new member(s) from the applications or nominees submitted to it by the College and University Council for the applicable private/public seat. In making their selection the COA will strive to maintain the traditional balance of membership with three (3) individuals representing programs in the public institutions and three (3) representing the private, single purpose institutions. Individuals selected by the COA to serve as one of the Educator members of the committee must be full-time funeral service faculty or administrators at an ABFSE accredited institution/program, possess a minimum of a master's degree, be credentialed as a Funeral Director in their state of employment, have completed the Self study/Accreditation Workshop, sign the ABFSE/COA Conflict of Interest Statement (see Appendix G of The Manual), and have at least three years' experience in funeral service education at an ABFSE accredited institution or program. See application form in Appendix B.
 - 1b. Educators Representing the College and University Council: In the event it becomes necessary to seat one or more representatives from the College and University Council as required by Section A of Article VI of the By-Laws, a notice will be sent to members of the College and University Council soliciting three or more nominations from that group for membership on the COA. Member qualifications are cited in 1a. above. The COA will elect from the list of those nominated. Following that election as future vacancies occur in the College and University representative, the COA will advise that group 12 months prior to a vacancy occurring and solicit nominations in the manner noted elsewhere in Section P. See application form in Appendix B.

- 1
2 2. Member Associations A notice will be sent to the appropriate association requesting that the association
3 nominate three qualified individuals to be considered for appointment. The nominees from each member
4 association may not include its chief executive officer or any sitting members of its board (whether elected
5 or non-elected). Nominees must be selected by a vote of the membership, and not by the board or chief
6 executive officer. When each association receives the invitation to nominate candidates, it will be provided
7 with instructions on how to document its nomination and election procedures. The COA may choose from
8 the list of nominees or it may request that additional names be submitted. The appointment of an association
9 representative to the COA is the sole responsibility of the Committee on Accreditation.

10
11 Individuals selected by the COA to serve as Professional members of the Committee must be licensed as
12 funeral service practitioners at the time of their appointment, be actively involved in the profession, sign the
13 ABFSE/COA Conflict of Interest Statement (see Appendix G of The Manual), be members in good standing
14 of their respective national and/or state professional associations, and complete the Self study/Accreditation
15 Workshop within six months of their first meeting.

- 16
17 3. Public. A notice will be sent to accredited programs, the associations, and appropriate funeral service
18 organizations requesting that they publish the request for nomination of individuals to serve as public
19 members. The notice will indicate that the public member must be from outside the field of funeral service
20 or funeral service education. (See Appendix B-7) The appointment of a public member to the COA is the
21 sole responsibility of the Committee on Accreditation. Individuals selected by the COA to serve as Public
22 members of the committee must sign the ABFSE/COA Conflict of Interest Statement (see Appendix G of
23 The Manual), complete the Self study/Accreditation Workshop within six months of their first meeting,
24 and meet the ‘public member’ definition appearing in Article VI of the By-laws and Chapter III of The
25 Manual on Accreditation.

26
27 At least 25% (of which includes one Educator and one Public Member) of the voting members of the COA
28 must demonstrate significant experience in Distance Education at the supervisory, developmental, or
29 practitioner level.

30 31 Q. CURRICULUM OUTLINES

- 32
33 1. The following statement shall appear at the bottom of each page of the Curriculum Outlines: “This outline
34 and glossary may not be reproduced without the express written permission of ABFSE.”
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36 2. Member schools are authorized to distribute glossaries to their students.
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38 3. Member schools agree that
39
40 a. The outline is available to ABFSE accredited member institutions and approved candidates for
41 educational purposes only.
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43 b. The Executive Committee of ABFSE, at its discretion, has the authority to distribute these documents,
44 as it considers appropriate, to ABFSE affiliated members and other member organizations only.
45
46 4. The following policies apply to the use and distribution of curriculum outlines:
47
48 a. Glossaries (but not Outlines) may be reproduced and distributed to students.
49
50 b. Outlines are not to be reproduced or distributed to anyone other than funeral service or related faculty.
51
52 c. Outlines may not be posted to public access media (e.g., the www) unless password protected.
53
54 d. Outlines and glossaries are not to be duplicated for sale in any form without the written permission of
55 ABFSE.

5. Use of ABFSE curriculum outlines and glossary.

a. The curriculum outlines and glossary of the ABFSE are viewed as intellectual property of the ABFSE. ABFSE holds copyright for the Outlines and accompanying glossaries. Duplication of glossaries in textbooks must be approved by ABFSE.

b. In lieu of royalties for use of the ABFSE outlines and glossaries the following will apply:

Duplication of glossary and use of outline as basis for a textbook applicable for life of outline (until next revision)	\$1000
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Access to all outlines/glossaries for use in textbooks on continuous basis	\$1500/year
--	-------------

Purchase of complete set of curriculum outlines (hard copy)	\$10,000
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Purchase of outlines by interested schools/programs (including candidate schools) does not authorize use or distribution for textbooks and is subject to the policy cited above.

R. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION

1. A detailed, written annual evaluation of the Executive Director is the responsibility of the Chair of the COA and the ABFSE President.

4. The Executive Director prepares an annual self-evaluation which is sent to the COA Chair and the President. The self-evaluation will include a discussion of the following: an overall assessment of the accomplishments for the year based on the list of responsibilities of the Executive Director; a list of those areas that merited special attention; areas that may need special attention; and goals for the next year.

3. The Executive Director, the COA Chair, and the President will discuss the self-evaluation and any other issues that they may wish to consider.

4. The COA Chair and the ABFSE President shall prepare a written evaluation of the Executive Director based on the Executive Director's work with the COA and with the ABFSE in its entirety. The COA Chair and President shall solicit input from ABFSE Committee chairs, Executive Committee members, and others. The written evaluation includes a discussion of strengths, areas needing more attention, and recommendations for renewal of appointment (if that is the decision) and also for an appropriate salary increase. Also included in the evaluation are any suggestions for improvement that might be thought beneficial to ABFSE, the COA, and the Executive Director. The Executive Director has an opportunity to review the written evaluation and discuss it with the COA Chair and President before it is finalized.

5. The evaluation of the Executive Director is put on the agenda of the Committee on Accreditation. ABFSE officers shall be invited to the COA meeting for the agenda item. The ABFSE President and officers shall not be present during regular Committee on Accreditation matters prior to the Executive Director evaluation agenda item and shall be excused from the meeting once the agenda item is concluded. A copy of the Executive Director's self-evaluation as well as the written evaluation by the chair of the COA and President is included as supporting material for that agenda item. At the meeting, the Executive Director is invited to make a brief presentation to the Committee on Accreditation and then the COA Chair and President make a presentation, including their recommendations.

6. Members of the Committee on Accreditation and ABFSE officers are invited to ask questions of the Executive Director, the Chair of the COA, and/or the President.

7. Following full discussion, the Committee on Accreditation and the ABFSE officers vote on the recommendations of the COA Chair and President, including any amendments to the motion. Each member of the Committee on Accreditation receives one vote and each ABFSE officer receives one vote. At no time shall the ABFSE officers have more votes than the total combined votes of the members of the Committee on Accreditation.

8. The action of the Committee on Accreditation and the ABFSE Officers is reported to the full membership.

S. USE OF ABFSE LOGO

1. The logo created by ABFSE to create brand recognition is for the express use of ABFSE only.
2. In the event an accredited program/institution desires a visual demonstration of accreditation status, the use of the logo in college publications may be authorized with written consent of the Executive Director.
3. Written requests to use the ABFSE logo must designate the name of the school/program as recognized by the ABFSE, the purpose for which the logo will be used and the anticipated length of time the logo will be used.
4. Use of the ABFSE logo in connection with an unaccredited program, including a program in Candidacy, is strictly prohibited.

T. ABFSE BANKING/INVESTMENT POLICY

1. ABFSE funds shall be held in FDIC insured banking institutions with attention paid to limits on total deposits per institution.
2. Appropriate balances are to be held in operating accounts. Excess funds should be transferred to money market (or equivalent) accounts where practical.
3. Where possible, Certificates of Deposit (or similar instruments) shall be utilized.
4. Accounts designated via audit as "Donor Restricted" accounts will be designated on the Budget reports. (example: Scholarship funds).

U. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ILLNESS AND DEATH POLICY

1. When the ABFSE office is notified of the illness of an ABFSE member, a Get Well card will be mailed as soon as possible.
2. ABFSE will acknowledge the death of a member, spouse, child, or parents of members with an email notification to the ABFSE community, sympathy card and flowers or a donation to either the memorial chosen by the family or to the ABFSE Scholarship Fund (\$100)
3. The same policy will apply for members of the ABFSE Executive Committee, Committee on Accreditation, ABFSE staff and past officers of ABFSE.
4. Email notification to the ABFSE community and card are authorized for past members of ABFSE.
5. An ABFSE representative to attend the funeral is authorized for an ABFSE member. The Executive Director has the discretion to make exceptions.
6. ABFSE makes every effort to acknowledge the loss of members (and family) during the Annual Conference "Prayer of Remembrance."

V. ABFSE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Individuals authorized to represent ABFSE and COA are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable and necessary travel expenses (i.e., site visits, invited guests/presenters, attendance at COA meetings, etc.).

Reimbursement is to include:

1. Transportation, i.e., regular airfare (no 1st class) with bag fees, mileage to/from airport, parking, transfers, rental car when that is best option, and mileage at current IRS approved rate, etc. (when personal auto is mode of travel, mileage reimbursement should be comparable to other modes of travel).
2. Lodging, including local taxes. Early arrival or late departure not related to the event will be the responsibility of the traveler.
3. Meals (alcoholic beverages will not be billed to an institution during site visits without prior approval).
4. Ground transportation to meals and back to the hotel during authorized travel.
5. Gratuities.

W. TRAVEL DISRUPTION POLICY

In the event that travel for site visits, etc. is disrupted, the following will apply to travel reimbursement considerations:

1. When weather and issues outside the control of the traveler intervene, reasonable efforts to re-schedule should be attempted. Re-booking fees will be included in the travel reimbursement request.
2. Should illness prevent a team member from participating in an assignment, COA may approve reasonable expenses and time spent in preparation.
3. Purchase of travel insurance is not recommended unless extenuating circumstances apply. Such occurrences should be reviewed with the Executive Director prior to the purchase of travel insurance, unless this is impossible.
4. Schedule changes made solely to accommodate the traveler are not generally approved for reimbursement, unless such changes positively impact travel expense.
5. Questions and requests for exceptions to these guidelines should be addressed to the Executive Director.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

1. **Accreditation.** The voluntary submission of an institution to the close scrutiny of the ABFSE Committee on Accreditation, which is composed of, educational representatives, funeral professionals, and laity for adherence to high standards of educational opportunity for all students.
2. **Accreditation Term.** The period for which accreditation is awarded.
3. **Additional location.** A physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. An additional location participates in the title IV, HEA programs only through the certification of the main campus.
4. **American Board.** American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE).
5. **Bachelor's or Master's Degree.** When required of faculty or administration such degrees shall be awarded by a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the U. S. Department of Education.
6. **Branch campus.** Branch Campus is a location of an institution or program that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution or program. Such a location is permanent in nature, offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and has its own budgetary and hiring authority. (as defined by 34 CFR 600.2)
7. **Candidacy.** This is the pre-accreditation status for programs seeking recognition/accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation of ABFSE. (see Chapter IV)
8. **Chairperson of the Site Visit Team (Team Chair).** A non-funeral service educator, experienced in the evaluation of institutions of higher learning, who has been appointed by the COA.
9. **Chief Administrative Officer.** If the curriculum in funeral service education is part of other curricula offered by the college or university, then the chief administrative officer shall be the highest administrative officer of the central administration. In this case, all matters concerning accreditation shall be sent to both the central administration and the department that offers instruction in funeral service education. In a single purpose institution, the chief administrative officer is that person so designated by the institution.
10. **CHEA.** Council for Higher Education Accreditation is a [United States](#) organization that serves as a major national voice and advocate for higher education accreditation and quality assurance.
11. **Clinical Instructor.** An individual licensed and employed full or part time to assist in teaching a laboratory or clinical offering under the supervision of the qualified faculty member responsible for the classroom lecture course in which the lab is offered.
12. **Committee on Accreditation (COA).** An autonomous standing committee of the ABFSE with sole authority to grant candidacy, initial accreditation or reaccreditation to institutions of funeral service education. (see By-Laws, Article VI)
13. **Comprehensive review.** The process by which an accredited institution or program, including a candidate program, is evaluated in the context of the ABFSE accreditation standards and policies. Comprehensive review includes the self study and site visit.
14. **Continuous System of Program Planning and Assessment.** A written, well-defined process that produces a documented plan directly related to the program's learning objectives and which contains guidelines, procedures, and methodologies for continually ensuring the on-going educational quality of the instructional program and the attainment of expected student outcomes.
15. **Executive Director.** The person responsible for the function of the office of the American Board.
16. **Feasibility Study.** A detailed document that demonstrates that a program/institution meets the requirements for accreditation, has effectively organized resources to enable it to accomplish its educational purpose, and is following realistic plans to acquire, organize, and apply additional resources needed to comply with the Standards for Accreditation. This document becomes the candidacy Self study.
17. **Focus Visit.** A visit by a representative(s) of the Committee on Accreditation, to a program about which the COA has a specific concern. These visits are for the purpose of reviewing the items of COA concern. Expenses are the responsibility of the program/institution being visited.
18. **Funeral Service Education or Mortuary Science Education.** An educational program designed to prepare an embalmer, funeral director, and/or similarly designated professional.
19. **Initial Accreditation.** Status that applies when a program moves from Candidacy to Accreditation.
20. **Institution.** A school, college, or university offering a program of funeral service education, whether identified as an academy, a college, an institute, a school, or by similar designations.
21. **IPEDS.** Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. It is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs.

- 1 22. **Manual.** Accreditation and Policy Manual of the American Board of Funeral Service Education.
- 2 23. **National Board Examination (NBE).** The formal certifying examination for the funeral service/mortuary
- 3 science profession developed and administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service
- 4 Examining Boards (ICFSEB or The Conference), 1885 Shelby Lane, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72704. The
- 5 purpose of the National Board Examination (NBE) as described by ICFSEB is to provide official licensing
- 6 agencies with a national evaluation of an applicant for licensure in the diverse areas of competency required
- 7 for the field of funeral service. The Conference develops, administers and provides score reporting services
- 8 to the state licensure boards. The NBE is utilized by the states and the District of Columbia as an assessment
- 9 of content knowledge needed to practice as a licensed Funeral Director or Embalmer.
- 10 24. **Pre-Candidacy.** This represents the time during which a program/institution is considering or anticipating
- 11 the application for Candidacy. A consulting visit by ABFSE representatives is required to review the status
- 12 of the program including the ability to meet ABFSE candidacy eligibility requirements. Pre-candidacy is not
- 13 an ABFSE accreditation status (see Chapter IV and Appendix D).
- 14 25. **Preceptor.** A licensed individual employed by a funeral home or other licensed funeral facility who agrees
- 15 to oversee/supervise on the job training for a student enrolled in an accredited program. Preceptors under
- 16 this definition must meet qualifications as indicated in this manual.
- 17 26. **Program.** The funeral service education offering provided by a comprehensive, multi-purpose institution.
- 18 27. **Public Members.** Representatives who are laypersons in the sense that they are not educators in or members
- 19 of the profession for which the students are being prepared, nor are in any way directly related to the
- 20 institutions or programs being evaluated.
- 21 28. **Qualified Instructor.** A full- or part-time faculty member meeting qualifications as indicated in this manual.
- 22 29. **Substantive change.** Any change at the institution or program level that impacts the ability to maintain
- 23 compliance with standards. See Chapter VIII, p. 8-6 and Appendix K for examples and associated fees.
- 24 30. **Self Study.** Is a formal process (which culminates in a written document) during which an educational
- 25 institution or program critically examines its structure and substance, judges the program's overall
- 26 effectiveness relative to its mission, identifies specific strengths and deficiencies and indicates a plan for
- 27 necessary modification and improvements. A similar document is prepared for candidacy and is also referred
- 28 to as a feasibility study.
- 29 31. **Site Visit Team.** Individuals appointed by the COA to visit and evaluate an institution/program for purposes
- 30 of accreditation/re-accreditation.
- 31 32. **Teach-out plan.** A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of
- 32 students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100 percent of at least one program, ceases
- 33 to operate or plans to cease operations before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.
- 34 (34CFR 600.2)
- 35 33. **Teach-out agreement.** A written agreement between institutions that provides the opportunity for students
- 36 at one institution to complete their program of study at another institution when the original institution or
- 37 program ceases to operate or plans to cease operations.
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APPENDIX B

SAMPLE FORMS

AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION
APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

Name of Institution _____

Program Title _____

Program Director/Dean or other contact person during Candidacy?

_____(Name/title)

Address _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____

Email _____ Web _____

Degree(s) to be offered _____

Will Degree be offered via Distance Education? _____ YES _____ NO

Department/Division, etc. in which program will be located? _____

Proposed location of clinical embalming: _____ On-Campus _____ Off-Campus _____ Both

Define the target service area:

Are there other ABFSE accredited or Candidate programs in your projected service area?

_____ YES _____ NO (If yes, list the programs)

CERTIFICATION: I certify that the following items have been, or are being submitted in support of this application:

1. the Candidacy Self study via WEAVE or other platform as described in Chapters IV and V of the Accreditation and Policy Manual, and
2. Candidacy Fee as specified in Appendix D of the Accreditation and Policy Manual.

Signature of person authorized to act on behalf of the institution:

Signature

Date

Title

1 **AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION**
2 **COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION**

3
4 **TRANSMITTAL FORM**

5
6 Date: _____
7

8
9 This Application for Accreditation is submitted by:

10 _____
11 Name and Address of Institution

12 for use by the site visit team and the Committee on Accreditation for the purpose of recommending whether or not
13 this institution should be accredited, by the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

14 We certify that:

- 15
16 1. In preparing this Application, there was broad participation by members from all applicable segments of
17 the institution;
18 2. We believe this Application truly and accurately portrays this institution.
19

20 _____
21 Signature

22
23 _____
24 Name and Title

Chief Academic Officer
(President, Chancellor, etc.)

25
26 _____
27 Signature

28
29 _____
30 Name and Title

Head of the Funeral
Service Education Program

31
32 _____
33 Signature

34
35 _____
36 Name and Title

Faculty member,
Officially representing the Faculty

37
38 _____
39 Signature

40
41 _____
42 Name and Title

Student officially representing the
Student Body

43
44 _____
45 Signature

46
47 *(SAMPLE –Should be signed by all groups participating; delete this line before submission)*
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PROGRAM AND INSTITUTION DATA FORM for Self Study

1. Name of Program _____ 2. Program Director _____
- Address _____ Phone _____
- _____ Email _____
3. Institution _____
4. Institution CEO _____ Phone _____
- Address (if different than Program) _____ Email _____
- _____
5. Name and Title of Individual to Whom Program Director Reports: _____
- (note: An Organizational Chart for the Institution must be provided to satisfy Standards 1.7 & 2)
6. Type of Institution: Public _____ Single Purpose _____
- Private _____ Multi-Purpose _____
- Two-year or Community College _____
- Four-year College or University _____
7. Is the institution regionally accredited? Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, give agency name and date of last action _____
8. Has any adverse action been taken or is any adverse action currently in effect concerning the institution by any accrediting agency approved by the US Secretary of Education?
- If yes, describe below (add additional sheets if necessary) _____
9. Is ABFSE a 'gatekeeper' for Title IV eligibility for the institution? Yes _____ No _____
10. Indicate the accredited program(s) offered. Check all that apply:
- _____ Associate degree _____ Diploma _____ Certificate _____ Other (specify) _____
- _____ Bachelor's degree (leading to funeral service licensure)
- _____ Bachelor's degree (leading to funeral service degree completion)
11. Can students complete courses in any accredited program via Distance Education? Yes _____ No _____
- Is 50% or more of the accredited program available via Distance Education? Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, indicate the number of credit hours applicable to the program(s) that are available via Distance _____
12. The accredited program (or Candidate program) primarily draws students from which area?:
- National _____ Regional _____ Local _____
- Comments (optional) _____
13. Institution/program operates under the statutory authority of which state? (Standard 1.6) _____

Program Background.

14. Year in which the accredited Program was originally established _____

Has the program operated continuously at this institution and/or location? Yes _____ No _____

If no, explain _____

15. Year in which first class graduated _____

16. Total number of graduates to date _____

17. First year Class capacity _____

18. Provide a three-year summary of the following data (which is available via Annual Reports)

	New enrollees	M/F	Related	Graduates
Current year _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Previous year _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2 years prior _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

19. Curriculum Overview. (required to fulfill expectations of Standard 6 along with Form B-6)

- List all courses for each accredited program(s) in a single document (preferably a single page).
- Include both general education and funeral service specific courses.
- Group courses by semester/quarter and identify the sequence in which the terms occur.
- For each course, provide the course number, course title, and credit hours assigned.
- Designate the delivery modality (on-campus, online, blended) for each program course.
- Indicate which courses are elective.

20. Faculty Data for Self study (is submitted as a separate report for Standard 7).

URL Directory

College website _____

Program webpage _____

College catalog _____

Program curriculum page(s) _____

Accreditation Statement _____

Student Handbook _____

Faculty Handbook _____

Constitution and By-Laws _____

Other _____

ABFSE Annual Report

B5

The following link will take you to the ABFSE Online Annual Report and User Guide:

[ABFSE User Guide and Reports \(PDF\)](#)

CURRICULUM DISTRIBUTION by ABFSE CONTENT AREA

(as per pages 9-7 - 9-9 [items 5.3 – 5.4.8h] of the Accreditation and Policy Manual;
revised October 2019 with changes to be implemented no later than January 1, 2020)

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Totals
Public Health & Technical (Min: 14 sem/21 qtr)			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
SUBTOTAL in Public Health			
Business Management and Professional (Min: 16 sem/24 qtr)			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
SUBTOTAL in Business Management			
Social Sci/Humanities (Min: 6 sem/9 qtr)			
1			
2			
3			
4			
SUBTOTAL in Social Science			
Legal, Ethical, Regulatory (Min: 3 sem/4 qtr)			
1			
2			
SUBTOTAL in Legal			
General Education (25% of Total in Line 52 [including Gen Ed])			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
TOTAL in General Education			
TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED IN PROGRAM			

1
2
3
4

**American Board of Funeral Service Education
COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION
Public Member Nominee Worksheet**

Name of Nominee
Contact Information

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone

Email Address

A. ☐ Nominating Individual or Organization (Identify):

☐ Self-Nomination

- 1. Is this nominee an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited or pre-accredited by the Committee on Accreditation, or has applied for accreditation of pre-accreditation?**

No

Yes

If yes, please explain:

- 2. Is this individual a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the Committee on Accreditation or the American Board of Funeral Service Education**

No

Yes

If yes, please explain:

- 3. Is this individual a spouse, parent, child, or sibling, or an individual identified in the first or second paragraph of this definition?**

No

Yes

If yes, please explain:

COMMENTS:

B. Nominee should provide 1) brief resume and 2) brief statement describing his/her interest in serving on the COA

C. List two references:

Name	Address/Phone/Email	Position

Name/Title of Person Completing This Report

Date

5
6
7

**Committee on Accreditation
Educator Member Application**

Name of Applicant _____

Representing ABFSE accredited institution/program

Name _____

Type: Single purpose _____ Multi-purpose _____

Applicant is: FT Faculty _____ FT Administrator _____

State of licensure _____

Number of years in funeral service education _____ Date started _____

Attended Self-Study workshop? yes no If yes, Date _____

Distance Education experience yes no

(At least 25% of the voting members of the COA must demonstrate significant experience in Distance Learning at the supervisory, developmental, or practitioner level.

(By-Laws Article VI. A. page 2-6)

Attach resume. (include accreditation and/or site visit experience)

Individuals selected by the COA to serve as one of the Educator members of the committee must:

- be full-time funeral service faculty or administrators at an ABFSE accredited institution/program,
- possess a minimum of a master's degree,
- be credentialed as a Funeral Director in their state of employment,
- have completed the Self study/Accreditation Workshop,
- have at least three years' experience in funeral service education at an ABFSE accredited education institution or program
- sign the ABFSE/COA Conflict of Interest Statement (see Appendix G of The Manual)

(ABFSE Policy Manual. Chapter X. P. page 10-6/10-7)

1 Additional considerations:

- 2 • COA must select its own members as per the Constitution and By-laws in order to
- 3 maintain separate and independent status necessary for recognition as an accreditor
- 4 by USDE and CHEA.
- 5 • Candidates should demonstrate familiarity with ABFSE activities via attendance at
- 6 ABFSE annual meetings, ABFSE committee participation, documented participation
- 7 in institutional Self study preparation, participation as a member of a site visit team,
- 8 etc.
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COMPLAINT ABOUT ABFSE ACCREDITED PROGRAM

Complainant Contact Information

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip Code:
Telephone Number:
Email Address:

Summary of Complaint (Attach additional pages, if necessary)

Name of ABFSE Accredited School: _____

1. Provide a brief summary of the complaint. Include any documentation or other evidence to support the allegation. (Attach additional pages if necessary)

2. Indicate the Standard(s) alleged to have been violated and when the alleged violation(s) took place.

3. Describe how the alleged complaint is in violation of ABFSE Standards:

4. Describe attempts to resolve the issues with the accredited program and/or sponsoring institution and any responses received.

By signing below, I authorize a copy of this complaint to be sent to the institution and to provide the ABFSE further information as requested in its investigation. I have read the complaint process outlined in the ABFSE Manual and I understand that the ABFSE only investigates complaints related to the standards of accreditation and does not resolve issues between individuals and an accredited institution or program. Actions taken against a program or institution as the result of a complaint are limited to the sanctions outlined in the ABFSE Manual and do not adjudicate or resolve any other causes of action or disputes.

Signature _____ Date _____

B-9

(to be printed on school letterhead)

1 Faculty Without Masters

2
3 Standard 6.1.2

4
5 All newly- and re-appointed full-time faculty must earn a master's degree from a regionally
6 accredited college or university within five years of their initial appointment date. Faculty
7 who fail to meet the five-year requirement may not be allowed to teach until the degree is
8 awarded.

9
10 Institution/program name _____

11 Faculty Member name _____

12 Date of initial employment (month/year) _____

13
14 I/we understand that full-time faculty members must earn a Master's Degree from a regionally
15 accredited institution within five years of initial appointment.

16 Faculty who fail to meet the five-year requirement are not allowed to teach until the degree is
17 awarded.

18 Violation of this standard is reason for the program to be placed on 'Probation' immediately.

19
20
21
22 _____
23 Faculty member

Date

24
25 _____
26 Program Director

Date

27
28 _____
29 Dean/Academic Officer

Date

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3 **APPENDIX C**

4

5 **GUIDE FOR THE**

6 **SELF STUDY PROCESS AND REPORT**

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APPENDIX GUIDE FOR SELF STUDY PROCESS AND REPORT

INTRODUCTION:

This section of the Accreditation and Policy Manual is intended to assist programs with the Self study process and preparing the Self study document prior to an accreditation visit. Chapter V of the Accreditation and Policy Manual presents an overview of the accreditation process and important information related to the Self study process and report. It should be read before proceeding with this section.

Program directors are expected to attend a Self study workshop held in April and October each year. PowerPoint notes from the workshop are available at the 'For Educators' page of the ABFSE website.

I. ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING THE SELF STUDY PROCESS

As noted in Chapter V, a Self study is a formal process during which an educational institution or program critically examines its structure and substance, judges the program's overall effectiveness relative to its mission, identifies specific strengths and deficiencies and identifies a plan for any necessary modification and improvements. Because the formalized process takes many months, programs should begin well in advance of an anticipated site visit.

Ideally, the Self study should be an integral part of the program's ongoing self-evaluation and not constitute the only evidence of planning which takes place.

Programs seeking Initial Accreditation often use consultants as guides through the process. This is not an ABFSE requirement, but many programs find it to be valuable. The American Board of Funeral Service Education office can provide contact info for individuals who have provided consultant services.

Following are general procedures to follow in the preparation of the Self study.

1. Approximately 18 months in advance of reaccreditation, the program is notified by letter of the approximate date for the next comprehensive evaluation. This letter also suggests a timeline for the process.
2. Approximately one year in advance, the program should establish a Self study Steering Committee whose responsibility will be completion of the final document. The makeup of the committee varies. However, most include membership from departmental faculty along with student representation from the department. The committee is most often, but not always, chaired by the head of the program. It is important, however, that one person be assigned overall responsibility for insuring the work is done on time, that it progresses as it should, that all assignments are carried out properly, and that the electronic self study document is submitted on time.
3. The committee organizes itself to collect data with regard to each of the standards of accreditation. This process generally involves meetings with campus personnel, program alumni, and advisory board members. Task Committees dealing with specific standards are often used. All committees used should be structured to be analytical and encouraged to question and debate broadly. A result of the Self study should always be a broader knowledge of the program, its underlying philosophy, and the application of that philosophy to its students. Demonstrating how departmental goals are integrated with institutional goals is always important.
4. To conduct the Self study, the program director should preview the Word version of the self study available from the ABFSE office or via the 'For Educators' page of the ABFSE. This is intended as a resource to ensure that the questions about each standard are adequately addressed.
5. The self study will be submitted electronically. Evidence to support answers and responses to the standards is to be uploaded. Scanned documents or PDF files are preferred for presentation of evidence.

6. Chapter V of the Accreditation and Policy Manual describes items to be submitted to the ABFSE with the Self study. The electronic version of the Self study provides instructions to upload the necessary documents.
A summary of the uploads associated with each Standard is also available as an Excel checklist.
(See the 'For Educators' page of the ABFSE website)

II. ORGANIZING AND COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY REPORT

A. Instructions for organizing the Self study.

The Self study is expected to be a document of evidence. Questions related to each standard are designed to ensure that necessary information is provided. For each Standard there is an option to supplement the response to questions with analysis and projection, to provide additional clarity regarding the manner in which the standards are being met and to explain future plans.

The electronic Self study Report is organized as follows:

INTRODUCTION
STANDARDS
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Introduction includes basic instructions. Here the Program will upload:

1. Transmittal Form (B-3)
2. Program and Institutional Data Form (B-4)
Includes: Curriculum Overview, Faculty Data Summary and a list of URLs for pertinent documents
3. Brief Description of the Self study Process
4. Description of Remediation of previously-cited deficiencies

Standards

The program is expected to provide a realistic description of its present status with regard to each Standard. Questions for each standard have been provided in order to focus the response on areas of interest to COA. Supporting documents and evidence will be uploaded with responses.

Responses will typically be a narrative text, answers to yes/no type questions and / or upload of supporting documents. In some cases, the URL will be requested. However, **links to evidence documents are not acceptable**. Since the Self study will be stored electronically, the basic document and supporting materials must be accessible in the future. Uploaded Word, Excel and/or PDF files are expected. Links are unlikely to survive changes to websites, etc. and therefore will not be accessible over time. In some cases, uploaded photos will fulfill the expectations.

Additional Information includes Summary and Conclusions and Appendix E.

This is the opportunity to provide a brief summary of program strengths, concerns, and plans to correct any problems discovered during the Self study process.

Appendix E is required for programs offering distance education. Many elements of Appendix E have been incorporated into the 2020 version of the electronic ABFSE Self study. Distance Education responses to Standards 9 and 10 (Appendix E) are found in the Additional Information section.

B. Completing the Report

One advantage of using available accreditation software - No TABLE OF CONTENTS for the Self study Report is necessary.

Introduction:

1. TRANSMITTAL FORM. (B-3)

This form is uploaded in the Introduction section. The original form accompanies payment of the comprehensive review invoice.

2. PROGRAM AND INSTITUTION DATA FORM (B-4)

Complete the Program and Institution Data Form (B-4), providing data in short answers or chart form as indicated in the directions on the form. Items 19 and 20 are completed via the Curriculum Overview (Excel) Chart and the Faculty Data Sheet (Word and Excel). Both are uploaded in response to other standards.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SELF STUDY PROCESS

Describe the process which resulted in the Self study Report, including the names and titles of individuals involved, their Self study committee assignments and the time schedule followed.

4. DESCRIPTION OF REMEDIATION OF PREVIOUSLY CITED DEFICIENCIES

If the program has been evaluated previously, indicate what the program has done since the last review to correct any deficiencies that may have been cited.

Standards:

After completing the questions associated with each standard there is an opportunity to provide an optional summary of the manner in which the program maintains compliance with the overall Standard. The optional summary is an opportunity to comment on compliance efforts not covered by the questions.

Additional Information:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Provide a brief summary of overall program strengths, concerns, and plans to correct any problems discovered during the Self study process.

APPENDIX E is required for all programs offering distance education. (be sure to review Appendix E before starting the Self study process.)

- III. DOCUMENTS. Review the Self study Report and the evidence to support the report begins before the site visit team arrives on the campus. Therefore, pertinent documentation should be uploaded in the response to each Standard. If this is not possible or practical, exceptions must be discussed with the team chair in advance and noted in the Self study document.

Institutions are expected to label each evidence file or folder using a readily identifiable name or title and/or by standard and substandard number, i.e. for Standard 1.1 or Standard 6.8.9. Embalming case reports by year/semester, student, etc.

When paper documents are necessary, they should be available in the team workroom for review during the site visit.

The Self study Report, the team's site visit report, the program's response to that report, and the interaction of program representatives with the Committee on Accreditation form the basis on which the COA determines compliance or non-compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ultimately the accreditation decision.

- IV. SITE VISIT. The actual sequence of the site visit will vary depending upon the program to be visited.
A sample site visit agenda is presented as a guide.

SAMPLE SITE VISIT AGENDA

DAY 1

Team Travel

Initial meeting of the site visit team in host school location.

Optional: Pre-arranged visit(s) to clinical sites.

(important when sites are on the route from airport to institution)

DAY 2

Morning: Preliminary meetings with key program personnel
Brief tour of campus, program offices, classrooms, labs
Team meeting
Interviews begin

Noon: Working lunch; faculty, students, advisory committee are encouraged to be present

Afternoon: Interviews continue

The following assignments are divided among team members.

Tour clinical (practicum) sites
Interview administrative officer(s) of program
Interview faculty
Interview students, graduates, advisory committee
Observe classes in session
Review and observe support services, such as library, financial aid, registrar, and maintenance of student records, etc.

Evening: Team meeting to review observations from the day, identify areas still to be evaluated or requiring additional attention, and work on draft of site visit report.

DAY 3

Morning: Complete remaining interviews, tours, etc.

Team meeting to review the main findings to be discussed during the exit interview (and included in the written site visit report).

Noon: Working lunch for team: continuation of the above discussions and final report preparation as necessary.
Complete draft of the written report.

Afternoon: Exit interview.
Institutional CEO determined those to be present. (typically, the administrative leadership team, program leadership and faculty and others who participated in the Self study process).

Final brief meeting, if needed.

Team departure.

Note: Travel logistics are coordinated between the Team Chair and the Program Director.
Depending on connection opportunities, additional travel time may be necessary.
Institutions with two or more accredited programs may require additional time for site visit review.
(examples: AS and AAS, AS and BS, any program offered via distance modality)

APPENDIX D ACCREDITATION FEE SCHEDULES

Effective 2022

AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, INC.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

(Subject to change -- contact the ABFSE office to confirm current fees)

Fees are due as indicated. Failure to submit when due may also lead to warning, probation, or loss of accreditation.

1. **CANDIDACY**

a. **PRE-CANDIDACY VISITATION EXPENSE**

Each program anticipating applying for Candidacy is required to have a consulting visit by the ABFSE Executive Director normally accompanied by a member of the COA or one of the site visit team chairs. This visit is to review status of the program, including its ability to meet ABFSE Candidacy Eligibility Requirements and ABFSE Standards of Accreditation. The visit allows the Executive Director to provide general application process assistance. Cost of the visit is borne by the program. A \$2,000 deposit is required. Costs include travel expenses for the Executive Director and 2nd person plus a stipend of \$750 to the 2nd person. Costs in excess of \$2,000 will be billed to the institution. Refund is provided when costs are less than the deposit.

b. **CANDIDACY FEE – \$22,000** Must accompany the "Application for Candidacy Status" form (B-1) and feasibility Self study. Candidacy fee includes purchase of curriculum outlines*.

*programs seeking to re-instate accreditation see Chapter IV.D.

c. **RENEWAL OF CANDIDACY FEE – \$10,000**

Must send with the request for continuation of candidacy status. This request must be made if the institution has not requested an initial accreditation visit within one year from the date of the original grant of candidacy status.

2. **INITIAL ACCREDITATION FEE -- \$7,500**

Invoice will be presented when accreditation is approved by COA.

Initial Accreditation requires a Self study and site visit.

Programs applying for Initial Accreditation receive a separate invoice for the Comprehensive Review Fee and Site Visit Expense payable sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled visit and accompanied by the "Application for Initial Accreditation" form (B-2).

3. **ABFSE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (ANNUAL RENEWAL of ACCREDITATION) -- \$7,500**

Must be submitted on or before September 1 of each year. If fiscal policy necessitates a reasonable delay, exceptions must be approved by the Executive Director of the American Board.

4. **COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW FEE (aka Self study) -- \$6,000; (\$7,000 for multiple programs or programs with distance education and traditional delivery effective October 2022).** Stipend to the team chair (\$2000) is part of the comprehensive review fee. *Note:* The comprehensive review fee is in addition to the annual renewal of accreditation fee, if applicable at the time of the visit.

Each institution scheduled for accreditation must submit the Self study AND a comprehensive review fee sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled visit.

5. **SITE VISIT EXPENSE**

There is no set fee for site visit expenses. The institution/program being visited is responsible for the entire cost of the visit, including team travel related expenses and stipends. (Site visit team members each receive a stipend of \$750 effective January 1, 2020).

Institutions/Programs to be visited must submit a \$4,500.00 Site Visit Expense Deposit at the time of submission

of the Self study. This will be credited against final site visit team expenses and the program will be provided with a final statement within forty five (45) days of the visit. The institution is responsible for all reasonable expenses regardless of school policy.

Site visit team member expenses are submitted directly to the ABFSE office for immediate reimbursement according to ABFSE policy. As soon as all expenses are reimbursed, a final statement will be sent to the program/institution (along with copies of receipts). Payment of the balance, if any, will be due upon receipt. Refund, if any, will accompany the final statement.

Expenses charged will be in conformance with the ABFSE Guidelines for Expense Reimbursement in effect on the dates of the visit. Challenge to any portion of the final statement shall be made to the Executive Director. If the institution/program wishes to dispute the Executive Director's decision on such expenses, it may file a written appeal directly to the Executive Committee of the ABFSE which will consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Executive Committee decisions are final.

6. FOCUS VISIT

When deemed necessary by the ABFSE Committee on Accreditation, a Focus Visit will be scheduled. Participating in the Focus Visit will be one of the site visit team chairs and the ABFSE Executive Director. Cost of the visit is borne by the program. These costs include a stipend of \$1,500 to the Team Chair and reimbursement of travel and related costs incurred by both members of the team (effective January 1, 2020).

Approval of a substantive change to add Distance Education requires a Focus Visit. This visit will be completed by a two-person team – one of the Team Chairs accompanied by a COA representative with distance education experience. Compensation for the Team Chair is \$1,500; second person \$750. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the program.

7. COURSE OUTLINE(S) FEE

a. Member Institutions (available via the Program Director using ABFSE provided password) no charge
Applicable use/distributions policies are described in Chapter X. Policies, Section Q.

b. Non-Member Institutions (one hard copy, printed and mailed)

(1) Affiliated with funeral service but not ABFSE member. Set of outlines: \$10,000

(2) Institutions seeking candidacy. Set of outlines: \$10,000

8. ADMINISTRATIVE PROBATIONARY ACCREDITATION \$500.00

- a. Late and/or Incomplete Annual Report
- b. Late payment of Annual Renewal Fee (due by September 1 of each year)
- c. Failure to advertise a program ethically and accurately
(includes references in Chapter X, Policies, Section D).
- d. Late reports (i.e. response to stipulations, response to visits, etc.)
- e. Late payment of expense reimbursements and other accreditation related fees
- f. Failure to agree to a reasonable site visit date

APPENDIX E

DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES and REQUIREMENTS

APPENDIX E

Distance Education

ABFSE policy stipulates that the Accreditation Standards apply regardless of the method of delivery. Distance Education offerings must meet all Standards in addition to meeting requirements of the U. S. Department of Education. Distance Education offerings also need to be evaluated with consideration of regional accreditor practices.

Funeral Service students are increasingly able to complete significant portions of their degree programs without face-to-face interaction. As distance education options proliferate, accreditation agencies are developing standards which will help ensure that all distance learning programs are consistent with the role and mission of the institution and that they receive academic and administrative support to a similar degree as all other institutional programs.

Therefore, based on the work completed by the regional accreditors, and the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), the original ABFSE distance education guidelines developed in October 2000 have been revised and updated to closely parallel the C-RAC Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education. C-RAC is a collective of seven regional organizations responsible for the accreditation of roughly 3,000 of the nation's colleges and universities. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) requires each institution participating in SARA (whether accredited by a "regional" or other recognized accreditor) "to attest that their institution meets and agrees to comply with" the C-RAC 2011 Interregional Guideline's nine primary provisions. It is intended that Appendix E be used by institutions in planning the use of distance education strategies and for the ongoing review and assessment of distance education once implemented.

Each program/institution which offers one or more courses via Distance Education formats must specifically address that course or courses independent of its discussion of other courses. This 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 Education offering(s). Second, the Self study must demonstrate how each element in the Appendix E Guidelines is satisfied for each course offered via Distance Education.

The Self Study discussion and the Site Visit Team Report relative to Distance Education offerings will assess the extent to which the courses and the educational services offered in support of Distance Education are structured. Moreover, discussion and reports must include evidence that demonstrates the presence of regular and substantive interaction that is initiated by faculty members and that is academic in nature. Admissions, registration, academic advising and counseling, tuition and fee payments, bookstore, library, tutoring and other academic and student support services for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs must be addressed. The Self study discussion and the Site Visit Report relative to Distance Education must also assess academic and technological support for faculty (e.g., faculty training for distance education course development, access to computer equipment, distance education support systems, etc.).

ABFSE Distance Education Definitions

Distance education refers to instruction offered through online learning and/or other electronic means, where the student and faculty member are in separate physical locations.

A distance education course refers to one in which instructional content is substantially delivered, either, synchronously or asynchronously, to students located in a physical location separate from the faculty member.

A hybrid course is subject to distance education requirements if 50% or more of the course is delivered via distance. Hybrid courses may be described in other terminology such as blended or web-enhanced, etc. Identity verification procedures must be in place if tests and exams are administered online.

A distance education program refers to an accredited program in which 50% or more of the courses are delivered, either synchronously or asynchronously, to students located in a physical location separate from the faculty member.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Federal Regulation §602.3 describes distance education as education that uses one or more of the technologies such as the internet, open broadcast transmission, audioconferencing, etc. to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

This regulation defines a correspondence course as “a course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.

Taken together, the primary factor distinguishing distance education from correspondence education is the presence of “regular and substantive interaction” between the faculty member and students. Self-study reports should provide evidence related to the following criteria related to regular and substantive interaction:

1. Interaction is initiated by the course’s instructor.
2. Interaction must be “regular” and at least somewhat frequent (at least weekly).
3. Interaction must be “substantive” – of an academic nature.

Reviewers are looking for regular, faculty-initiated interaction that promotes the achievement of the course’s stated learning objectives and outcomes.¹

Federal regulations pertaining to ABFSE’s distance education responsibilities

Federal Regulation §602.15 requires that the ABFSE “has the administrative and fiscal capability to carry out its accreditation activities in light of its requested scope of recognition.”

Federal Regulation §602.17g requires “institutions that offer distance education or correspondence education to have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The agency (ABFSE) meets this requirement if it—

- (1) Requires institutions to verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as—
 - (i) A secure login and pass code;
 - (ii) Proctored examinations; and
 - (iii) New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity; and
- (2) Makes clear in writing that institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.”

Federal Regulation §668.72 speaks to misrepresentation concerning the nature of an eligible institution’s education program, with language specific to state board licensing requirements.

Misrepresentation concerning the nature of an eligible institution’s educational program includes, but is not limited to, false, erroneous or misleading statements concerning—

* * *

- (c) Whether successful completion of a course of instruction qualifies a student—

* * *

¹ WCET Frontiers: <https://wcetfrontiers.org/2016/09/30/interpreting-regular-and-substantive-interaction> by Russ Poulin and Van Davis.

- (2) To receive, to apply to take or to take the examination required to receive, a local, State, or Federal license, or a nongovernmental certification required as a precondition for employment, or to perform certain functions in the States in which the educational program is offered, or to meet additional conditions that the institution knows or reasonably should know are generally needed to secure employment in a recognized occupation for which the program is represented to prepare students.

Note that the definition of “misrepresentation” does not require intent: “A misleading statement includes any statement that has the likelihood or tendency to deceive.” 34 CFR 668.71(c). Therefore, a Federal regulatory obligation exists to provide professional licensure notifications and disclosures to prospective and enrolled students if the institution participates in Title IV HEA programs.

State Regulations pertaining to ABFSE-accredited Institutions

State authorization is a formal determination by a higher education agency (commonly a higher education board or commission) that allows an institution to conduct certain activities within its borders. Examples of these activities (often called “triggers”) include, but are not limited to, online students taking courses while in a particular state, face-to-face recruiting or targeted (specific to an individual or location) advertising, internships or other supervised field experiences, hiring a faculty member who resides in a certain state, or having a branch campus in another state. Institutions are responsible to know the triggers in each state and U.S. territory, and either not commence the activity that triggers the need for authorization or apply for and obtain state authorization, which gives permission to conduct activities in the state. Every state is different. Triggers vary from state-to-state. The cost and time to obtain and maintain authorization also varies widely.

In addition, each state has different standards for occupations that require a professional license or certification. Some examples include P-12 teacher, school administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, mental health counselor, family therapist, social worker, psychologist, nurse, CPA, funeral director, etc. Some licensing boards have standards an academic program must meet in order for a graduate to be eligible for a license or certification, and also publishes criteria an individual graduate must meet to be eligible for a license. It is the responsibility of institutions to know both sides of the professional licensing standards for each state where their graduates may seek a license or certification.

State authorization coupled with professional licensure is very complicated. The National Council for State Authorization Agreements (NC-SARA) administers an agreement between states that allows an institution approved in its home state to be approved in all other states that are members of the agreement. As advantageous as SARA is, **SARA does not automatically cover the requirement (in some states) for institutions to have licensure-track program approval by state professional licensing boards.** Each professional licensing board in every state is autonomous and establishes and governs the standards a program or a graduate must meet in order to earn a license or certification in a professional field. So, while SARA provides reciprocity for state authorization, it does not provide reciprocity or automatic approval for licensure track programs by professional licensing boards. An institution should determine the ways and how often it will communicate professional licensure information to its students and prospective students. Some state authorization entities require such notification and the federal government already requires this through the misrepresentation and gainful employment rules and ties compliance with these rules to the institution’s Title IV eligibility.²

² WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), 2017. Excerpts of this work by WCET are provided. State authorization and Professional Licensure: The Intersection of State Authorization Agencies and Professional Licensing Boards, is licensed under [Creative Commons](#).

Distance Education Guidelines

All programs offering distance education courses for funeral service are required to address the Appendix E Guidelines in the Self study (and/or Substantive Change Application). ABFSE serves as a ‘gatekeeper’ for most single purpose institutions. All distance education courses offered by these ‘gatekeeper’ institutions are included in the evaluation (general education and funeral specific courses).

ABFSE is not required to monitor general education courses offered by regionally accredited institutions. However, all funeral specific courses are subject to the Appendix E Guidelines.

When an accredited program adds distance education offerings and reaches the point where 50% or more of the program courses are available via distance education a Substantive Change application is required (including subsequent Focus Visit). See the definitions of distance education on page 1 of this Appendix.

These Distance Education Guidelines must be addressed in the accredited program’s Self study and for approval of a Substantive Change to add Distance Education.

Summary of Distance Education Guidelines

1. Distance education is appropriate to the institution’s and Funeral Service Program’s mission and purposes.
2. Plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding distance education offerings are part of the institution’s and Funeral Service Program’s regular planning and evaluation processes.
3. Distance education is incorporated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight.
4. Curricula for the distance education offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
5. Evaluation of distance education offerings includes the extent to which the distance education goals are achieved and uses the evaluation results to enhance the program.
6. Faculty responsible for distance education courses are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.
7. Effective student and academic support services are available to students enrolled in distance education offerings.
8. Sufficient resources are provided to support and, if appropriate, expand the distance education offerings for Funeral Service.
9. The institution assures the integrity of its distance education offerings.
10. The program complies with regulations in states in which it operates (State Authorization & Professional Licensing).

DISTANCE EDUCATION SELF STUDY Questions

Standard 1-Structure/Organization/Administration

Provide evidence that the institution assumes responsibility for:

- curricular content of distance courses
- approval for programs/courses moving from classroom to distance modes
- providing design assistance in developing and improving distance courses
- appointing and evaluating faculty teaching distance courses
- having policies and procedures in place for online institutional admission and program admission (if applicable)

Document that the institution has State approval for distance education and/or NC-SARA membership.

Provide evidence that the distance education program complies with regulations in the states in which it operates.

Describe the platform and technologies through which the institution offers distance education: Are the same technologies and platform used for all funeral service education offerings?

Does the institution have campus-based funeral service program or programs?

Does the institution offer distance general education courses applicable to the funeral service program: YES/NO If YES, explain.

Demonstrate through organizational charts and other evidence that sufficient personnel exist to provide distance education support for both faculty and students and that their reporting relationships show administrative support and a clear link to the institution's academic structure.

Provide the names and titles of key designated personnel who provide direct support for distance education.

Do all funeral service distance education instructors for the program report directly or indirectly to the Program Director? YES/NO If NO, explain.

Standard 2-Program Learning Outcomes:

Verify that the achievement of Learning Outcomes in distance courses/programs as well as measurements such as National Board Examination pass rates, graduation, and employment rates for distance education are continuously assessed.

Standard 3-Administrative Practices and Ethical Considerations:

Demonstrate that the institution/program ensures that publications and advertising accurately portray the realities of the distance education program. How does it:

Inform prospective students about the potential challenges of learning through distance instruction;

Specify all costs associated with taking a distance education program;

Provide accurate and detailed licensure information for students from all of States from which the institution accepts admission;

Explain clearly any face-to-face activity required (i.e., lab work, testing, funeral directing/ embalming practicum).

Does the institution offer one or more unaccredited distance education programs in funeral service? YES/NO

If YES, provide evidence that these are clearly distinguished from the accredited distance education program(s) in published information and on student transcripts as required in Standard 3.

Demonstrate distance student access to grievance and sexual harassment processes.

Document the protocols used to verify that a student enrolled in a distance education course is the same individual who is submitting assignments, taking quizzes and examinations (without aid of unauthorized materials or assistance), and earning credit for the course.

Provide evidence of the institution's mechanisms for ensuring copyright compliance for both students and faculty.

Document (if applicable) that when contractual relationships and/or other external arrangements are utilized for distance education offerings that the institution and funeral service education program are responsible for the academic quality of these distance education courses and materials.

Standard 4 –Finance

Demonstrate that the institution has sufficient distance education learning resources to:

Obtain necessary hardware, software and other technology relevant to the distance education program;

Update and replace technology essential to the distanced education program;

Offer faculty distance education training, course design assistance, and help with technology issues;

Provide students with support including orientation to all technology relevant to distance education.

Standard 5-Curriculum

Upload a completed FORM B-6 for the distance education program. Does it differ in any way from the campus-based program (if applicable)? YES/NO If YES, explain.

If NEW courses were created for the distance education program, upload the relevant syllabus for each of them.

Provide examples to demonstrate that distance courses incorporate regular and substantive faculty/student interaction which:

is initiated by the faculty member;

includes outreach contact at the start of the course;

occurs at least weekly or more;

is academic in nature;

offers feedback that is timely and relevant to student assignments and questions.

1 Demonstrate the academic rigor of distance courses:

2
3 If the program offers classroom based FSE courses, provide evidence that the rigor of these and the comparable
4 distance courses are equivalent.

5
6 Describe how the program will ensure that students:

7 fulfill embalming requirements;

8 are certified for entry-level competency;

9 complete as active participants, the funeral directing tasks required (Standard 5.4.8).

10
11 If applicable, describe any distinctive attributes of the program's distance offerings.
12
13

14 **Standard 6-Faculty**

15
16 Upload brief resumes, including distance instruction experience, of the faculty who teach distance education.

17
18 Describe how faculty teaching distance education are selected.

19
20 Demonstrate that funeral service faculty without prior distance teaching experience or experience on the learning
21 platform and technologies used distance for are trained before offering e-learning.
22

23 Provide evidence that faculty have access to periodic additional training (or distance-focused faculty development
24 opportunities) as technology and best practices for e-learning evolve.
25

26 Describe faculty input with distance course design.
27

28 Submit evidence to demonstrate that distance instruction is evaluated with an instrument designed to elicit data
29 leading to course and curricular improvement.
30
31

32 **Standard 7-Facilities**

33
34 No specific distance questions.
35
36

37 **Standard 8-Library/Learning Resources**

38
39 Demonstrate that distance students have:

40 an online orientation including how to find and view Library materials and databases;

41 distance access to assistance, databases and material when needed.
42

43 Provide examples of instances in which the distance courses require student use of the library and learning resources.
44
45

46 **Standard 9-Students**

47
48 Provide evidence that the program explicitly addresses distance education in its student-related ethical practices
49 statements (Standard 9.1.1.d).
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Demonstrate that distance students have access to an online orientation prior to the start of coursework with at least the content specified in Standard 9.3.1. (i.e., safety, student policies, facilities, student services).

Show that policies regarding grading, academic progress, attendance and graduation are published and available to distance education students before they start coursework.

Demonstrate the ways in which distance education students have access to services related to personal and academic matters, such as:

- Academic advising
- Tutoring or other help with academic difficulties
- Veterans' Affairs
- Conduct
- Licensure Information specific to their situation
- Employment Information

Describe any additional services for distance education students.

Demonstrate how funeral service distance education students can become involved in program governance.

Indicate how distance education students can remotely access online training for the platform used for online learning.

Provide evidence that distance education students have remote access to technical help when they are likely to need it.

Standard 10-Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment

Provide evidence that distance offerings are integrated into the program's documented assessment plan.

Standard 11-Default Rates applies to single-purpose, non-regionally accredited funeral service institutions participating in Title IV, the provisions of which encompass both classroom and distance education programs.

Standard 12 Program Length, Tuition, and Fees applies to single-purpose, non-regionally accredited funeral service institutions participating in Title IV, the provisions of which encompass both classroom and distance education programs.

Provide information about all costs and fees that a student would incur in the distance education program.

If applicable, describe how the Institution's distance education program length and tuition and fees compare with those of the campus-based program.

Standard 13-Program Length in Credit Hours applies to single-purpose, non-regionally accredited funeral service institutions participating in Title IV, the provisions of which encompass both classroom and distance education programs.

Does the distance education program utilize the definition of credit hours as promulgated by the Department of Education? YES/NO

Addition of distance education as the method of delivery of a previously accredited program is a substantive change requiring a Focus Visit as described in the ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual (page 8-7, Chapter VIII. I.1(iii)).

COA may authorize a Virtual Focus Visit when programs initiate a Substantive Change application to add delivery of the accredited program via distance. When the addition of a distance program also involves approval of a new degree a site visit may be appropriate.

The Executive Director will assign a 2-person team for the Focus Visit / Virtual Site Visit for evaluation of distance education. One of the *permanent* Team Chairs will lead the visit.

The virtual visit to review distance education will focus on Appendix E, relevant ABFSE standards and federal requirements. If out of state students are enrolled in the distance program, evidence of authority to operate in those locations, usually state approval, and/or evidence of NC-SARA membership, must be provided.

After being notified of a pending virtual site visit the Institution must review the Substantive Change application and Appendix E document previously submitted. Updated evidence should be added where applicable.

Evidence must be organized in folders to correspond with the appropriate section of Appendix E (for example, "Finance," "Students," etc.). These updates are to be submitted three weeks prior to the anticipated start of the virtual visit.

The Team Chair and program director will establish a timeline for the virtual visit (start-finish and synchronized with the institution's term(s) schedules). Virtual visits generally occur over a period of several months but will not commence until it has been established that additional evidence necessary to update Appendix E compliance is organized and available.

Elements of the Virtual Focus Visit:

- There will be periodic conferences between the team chair and program director to identify evidence needed to inform the review, to address questions resulting from document review and to coordinate team member activity moving forward.
- Access to online courses:
 - Access should enable the team to see all faculty activity and student activity, including communication demonstrating interaction through such items as recorded lectures, discussion forums, course emails, syllabi, and evidence of learning assessment via assignments and exams, etc.
- Access to students and faculty for 1:1 or one to group interviews.
 - Access to include names and contact information.
- Evidence list to support Appendix E (updated evidence to reflect changes made since the Substantive Change application was originally submitted):
 - Structure, Organization and Administration
 - Organizational structure, including staff who are partially or fully engaged in supporting the online program
 - Evidence of approval of the online program by the governing body
 - Institutional policies directly related to online program delivery, including copyright
 - If out of state students are enrolled, evidence of approval to operate in states where students reside
 - Program Learning Outcomes
 - Program learning outcomes of the online program that are consistent with those of the on-campus program.
 - If differences exist, explain why.
 - Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards
 - The current Catalog describing the distance program.
 - All program marketing materials, digital or otherwise.
 - Student complaint process.

- Finance
 - Financial support of the distance program must be sustained long enough for the enrolled cohort to complete.
 - Evidence that the financial needs of the distance learning program are included in the institution's overall budget structure.
 - Verification that the institution's budget provides for appropriate updating of the technology (software and hardware) necessary to maintain the program.
- Curriculum
 - Online course syllabi
 - Means used to address student identity and the integrity of student work
 - The means by which students satisfy embalming and funeral directing requirements, including an updated list of all off-campus facilities used, preceptors used at those facilities, evidence of affiliation agreements, preceptor training, date of site inspections
 - Curriculum Distribution (Form B-6) and Program term-by-term schedule
 - Access to any process or rubrics, with results, used to review and approve online courses for delivery.
- Faculty
 - In the Faculty Handbook designate specific references that apply to the distance education faculty.
 - Evidence related to part and full-time faculty preparation and credentials
 - Access to any process or rubrics, with results, used to evaluate distance education faculty.
- Library
 - Services and resources available to students located at a distance.
- Students
 - In the Student Handbook designate specific references that apply to distance education students.
 - Program information provided for prospective students
 - Provision and access to academic and student support services available without regard to the location of the student (see Appendix E for list).
 - Access to and documentation of any orientation program for students, whether optional or required.
- Program Planning and Evaluation
 - The assessment plan and system for the distance education program, with assessment results and use of results to inform program improvements.

Required evidence listed above, and any additional supporting evidence, **must** be placed in the appropriately named evidence folder associated with Appendix E categories as noted above (e.g. "faculty," "students," etc.).

Evidence file names should distinguish between items required for Appendix E and optional items that may also be included.

When updating the Substantive Change application and Appendix E for the virtual visit, use of Microsoft 'track changes' or similar method to differentiate the original content from the updated/amended content would be helpful.

APPENDIX F

STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN TITLE IV, HEA PROGRAMS

This excerpt from the Code of Federal Regulations is provided as reference material for those institutions accredited by ABFSE COA as ‘gatekeeper’.

In order to ensure compliance with the applicable regulations, those responsible for compliance must utilize the most current version of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Appendix F

This content is from the eCFR and is authoritative but unofficial.



Displaying title 34, up to date as of 12/01/2023. Title 34 was last amended 10/31/2023.



There are Federal Register documents that will modify this content. See the 'Cross Reference' blocks in the text of this content for more information.

Title 34 —Education

Subtitle B —Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education

Chapter VI —Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education

Part 668 —Student Assistance General Provisions

Subpart B —Standards for Participation in Title IV, HEA Programs

§ 668.16 Standards of administrative capability.

CROSS REFERENCE

[Link to an amendment published at 88 FR 74698, Oct. 31, 2023.](#)

To begin and to continue to participate in any Title IV, HEA program, an institution shall demonstrate to the Secretary that the institution is capable of adequately administering that program under each of the standards established in this section. The Secretary considers an institution to have that administrative capability if the institution—

- (a) Administers the Title IV, HEA programs in accordance with all statutory provisions of or applicable to Title IV of the HEA, all applicable regulatory provisions prescribed under that statutory authority, and all applicable special arrangements, agreements, and limitations entered into under the authority of statutes applicable to Title IV of the HEA;
- (b)
 - (1) Designates a capable individual to be responsible for administering all the Title IV, HEA programs in which it participates and for coordinating those programs with the institution's other Federal and non-Federal programs of student financial assistance. The Secretary considers an individual to be "capable" under this paragraph if the individual is certified by the State in which the institution is located, if the State requires certification of financial aid administrators. The Secretary may consider other factors in determining whether an individual is capable, including, but not limited to, the individual's successful completion of Title IV, HEA program training provided or approved by the Secretary, and previous experience and documented success in administering the Title IV, HEA programs properly;
 - (2) Uses an adequate number of qualified persons to administer the Title IV, HEA programs in which the institution participates. The Secretary considers the following factors to determine whether an institution uses an adequate number of qualified persons—
 - (i) The number and types of programs in which the institution participates;
 - (ii) The number of applications evaluated;
 - (iii) The number of students who receive any student financial assistance at the institution and the amount of funds administered;
 - (iv) The financial aid delivery system used by the institution;
 - (v) The degree of office automation used by the institution in the administration of the Title IV, HEA programs;
 - (vi) The number and distribution of financial aid staff; and
 - (vii) The use of third-party servicers to aid in the administration of the Title IV, HEA programs;

- (3) Communicates to the individual designated to be responsible for administering Title IV, HEA programs, all the information received by any institutional office that bears on a student's eligibility for Title IV, HEA program assistance; and
 - (4) Has written procedures for or written information indicating the responsibilities of the various offices with respect to the approval, disbursement, and delivery of Title IV, HEA program assistance and the preparation and submission of reports to the Secretary;
- (c)
- (1) Administers Title IV, HEA programs with adequate checks and balances in its system of internal controls; and
 - (2) Divides the functions of authorizing payments and disbursing or delivering funds so that no office has responsibility for both functions with respect to any particular student aided under the programs. For example, the functions of authorizing payments and disbursing or delivering funds must be divided so that for any particular student aided under the programs, the two functions are carried out by at least two organizationally independent individuals who are not members of the same family, as defined in § 668.15, or who do not together exercise substantial control, as defined in § 668.15, over the institution;
- (d)
- (1) Establishes and maintains records required under this part and the individual Title IV, HEA program regulations; and
 - (2)
 - (i) Reports annually to the Secretary on any reasonable reimbursements paid or provided by a private education lender or group of lenders as described under section 140(d) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1631(d)) to any employee who is employed in the financial aid office of the institution or who otherwise has responsibilities with respect to education loans, including responsibilities involving the selection of lenders, or other financial aid of the institution, including—
 - (A) The amount for each specific instance of reasonable expenses paid or provided;
 - (B) The name of the financial aid official, other employee, or agent to whom the expenses were paid or provided;
 - (C) The dates of the activity for which the expenses were paid or provided; and
 - (D) A brief description of the activity for which the expenses were paid or provided.
 - (ii) Expenses are considered to be reasonable if the expenses—
 - (A) Meet the standards of and are paid in accordance with a State government reimbursement policy applicable to the entity; or
 - (B) Meet the standards of and are paid in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles for reimbursement, if no State policy that is applicable to the entity exists.
 - (iii) The policy must be consistently applied to an institution's employees reimbursed under this paragraph;
- (e) For purposes of determining student eligibility for assistance under a title IV, HEA program, establishes, publishes, and applies reasonable standards for measuring whether an otherwise eligible student is maintaining satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program. The Secretary considers an institution's standards to be reasonable if the standards are in accordance with the provisions specified in § 668.34.
- (f) Develops and applies an adequate system to identify and resolve discrepancies in the information that the institution receives from different sources with respect to a student's application for financial aid under Title IV, HEA programs. In determining whether the institution's system is adequate, the Secretary considers whether the institution obtains and reviews—
- (1) All student aid applications, need analysis documents, Statements of Educational Purpose, Statements of Registration Status, and eligibility notification documents presented by or on behalf of each applicant;

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- (2) Any documents, including any copies of State and Federal income tax returns, that are normally collected by the institution to verify information received from the student or other sources; and
- (3) Any other information normally available to the institution regarding a student's citizenship, previous educational experience, documentation of the student's social security number, or other factors relating to the student's eligibility for funds under the Title IV, HEA programs;
- (g) Refers to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Education for investigation—
 - (1) After conducting the review of an application provided for under paragraph (f) of this section, any credible information indicating that an applicant for Title IV, HEA program assistance may have engaged in fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with his or her application. The type of information that an institution must refer is that which is relevant to the eligibility of the applicant for Title IV, HEA program assistance, or the amount of the assistance. Examples of this type of information are—
 - (i) False claims of independent student status;
 - (ii) False claims of citizenship;
 - (iii) Use of false identities;
 - (iv) Forgery of signatures or certifications; and
 - (v) False statements of income; and
 - (2) Any credible information indicating that any employee, third-party servicer, or other agent of the institution that acts in a capacity that involves the administration of the Title IV, HEA programs, or the receipt of funds under those programs, may have engaged in fraud, misrepresentation, conversion or breach of fiduciary responsibility, or other illegal conduct involving the Title IV, HEA programs. The type of information that an institution must refer is that which is relevant to the eligibility and funding of the institution and its students through the Title IV, HEA programs;
- (h) Provides adequate financial aid counseling to eligible students who apply for Title IV, HEA program assistance. In determining whether an institution provides adequate counseling, the Secretary considers whether its counseling includes information regarding—
 - (1) The source and amount of each type of aid offered;
 - (2) The method by which aid is determined and disbursed, delivered, or applied to a student's account; and
 - (3) The rights and responsibilities of the student with respect to enrollment at the institution and receipt of financial aid. This information includes the institution's refund policy, the requirements for the treatment of title IV, HEA program funds when a student withdraws under § 668.22, its standards of satisfactory progress, and other conditions that may alter the student's aid package;
- (i) Has provided all program and fiscal reports and financial statements required for compliance with the provisions of this part and the individual program regulations in a timely manner;
- (j) Shows no evidence of significant problems that affect, as determined by the Secretary, the institution's ability to administer a Title IV, HEA program and that are identified in—
 - (1) Reviews of the institution conducted by the Secretary, the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General, nationally recognized accrediting agencies, guaranty agencies as defined in 34 CFR part 682, the State agency or official by whose authority the institution is legally authorized to provide postsecondary education, or any other law enforcement agency; or
 - (2) Any findings made in any criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding;
- (k) Is not, and does not have any principal or affiliate of the institution (as those terms are defined in 2 CFR parts 180 and 3485) that is—
 - (1) Debarred or suspended under Executive Order 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) or the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4; or
 - (2) Engaging in any activity that is a cause under 2 CFR 180.700 or 180.800, as adopted at 2 CFR 3485.12, for debarment or suspension under E.O. 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) or the FAR, 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4;

- (l) For an institution that seeks initial participation in a Title IV, HEA program, does not have more than 33 percent of its undergraduate regular students withdraw from the institution during the institution's latest completed award year. The institution must count all regular students who are enrolled during the latest completed award year, except those students who, during that period—
 - (1) Withdrew from, dropped out of, or were expelled from the institution;
 - (2) Were entitled to and actually received in a timely manner, a refund of 100 percent of their tuition and fees;
- (m)
 - (1) Has a cohort default rate—
 - (i) That is less than 25 percent for each of the three most recent fiscal years during which rates have been issued, to the extent those rates are calculated under subpart M of this part;
 - (ii) On or after 2014, that is less than 30 percent for at least two of the three most recent fiscal years during which the Secretary has issued rates for the institution under subpart N of this part; and
 - (iii) As defined in 34 CFR 674.5, on loans made under the Federal Perkins Loan Program to students for attendance at that institution that does not exceed 15 percent.
 - (2)
 - (i) However, if the Secretary determines that an institution's administrative capability is impaired solely because the institution fails to comply with paragraph (m)(1) of this section, and the institution is not subject to a loss of eligibility under §§ 668.187(a) or 668.206(a), the Secretary allows the institution to continue to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs. In such a case, the Secretary may provisionally certify the institution in accordance with § 668.13(c) except as provided in paragraphs (m)(2)(ii), (m)(2)(iii), (m)(2)(iv), and (m)(2)(v) of this section.
 - (ii) An institution that fails to meet the standard of administrative capability under paragraph (m)(1)(ii) based on two cohort default rates that are greater than or equal to 30 percent but less than or equal to 40 percent is not placed on provisional certification under paragraph (m)(2)(i) of this section—
 - (A) If it has timely filed a request for adjustment or appeal under §§ 668.209, 668.210, or 668.212 with respect to the second such rate, and the request for adjustment or appeal is either pending or succeeds in reducing the rate below 30 percent; or
 - (B) If it has timely filed an appeal under § 668.213 after receiving the second such rate, and the appeal is either pending or successful; or
 - (C)
 - (1) If it has timely filed a participation rate index challenge or appeal under § 668.204(c) or § 668.214 from either or both of the two rates, and the challenge or appeal is either pending or successful; or
 - (2) If the second rate is the most recent draft rate, and the institution has timely filed a participation rate challenge to that draft rate that is either pending or successful.
 - (iii) The institution may appeal the loss of full participation in a Title IV, HEA program under paragraph (m)(2)(i) of this section by submitting an erroneous data appeal in writing to the Secretary in accordance with and on the grounds specified in §§ 668.192 or 668.211 as applicable;
 - (iv) If the institution has 30 or fewer borrowers in the three most recent cohorts of borrowers used to calculate its cohort default rate under subpart N of this part, we will not provisionally certify it solely based on cohort default rates;
 - (v) If a rate that would otherwise potentially subject the institution to provisional certification under paragraphs (m)(1)(ii) and (m)(2)(i) of this section is calculated as an average rate, we will not provisionally certify it solely based on cohort default rates;
 - (n) Does not otherwise appear to lack the ability to administer the Title IV, HEA programs competently;

- (o) Participates in the electronic processes that the Secretary—
 - (1) Provides at no substantial charge to the institution; and
 - (2) Identifies through a notice published in the *FEDERAL REGISTER*; and
- (p) Develops and follows procedures to evaluate the validity of a student's high school completion if the institution or the Secretary has reason to believe that the high school diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1845–0022)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1082, 1085, 1092, 1094, and 1099c)

[59 FR 22431, Apr. 29, 1994, as amended at 59 FR 34964, July 7, 1994; 59 FR 61180, Nov. 29, 1994; 60 FR 34431, June 30, 1995; 60 FR 42408, Aug. 15, 1995; 61 FR 60603, Nov. 29, 1996; 62 FR 27128, May 16, 1997; 63 FR 40624, July 29, 1998; 64 FR 59038, Nov. 1, 1999; 65 FR 65637, Nov. 1, 2000; 74 FR 55648, Oct. 28, 2009; 75 FR 66951, Oct. 29, 2010; 76 FR 52272, Aug. 22, 2011; 77 FR 18679, Mar. 28, 2012; 80 FR 67235, Oct. 30, 2015]

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APPENDIX G

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT



Confidentiality Statement Conflict of Interest Statement

To be completed by all members of the Committee on Accreditation,
Staff Members, Permanent Team Chairs and Site Visitors

As a member of the Committee on Accreditation, ABFSE Staff, Permanent Team Chair or Site Visitor, I have access to information that is, and must remain, confidential. I agree to respect and protect the confidentiality of all accreditation materials and of all other information discussed during Executive Sessions. I pledge to uphold this confidentiality agreement at all times and abide by the ABFSE Document Retention and Destruction policy.

In addition, I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Conflict of Interest prohibitions which appear in Chapter X, Section C, page 10-1, of the *ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual*. _____ (initial)

Signature

Printed Name

I am participating as (please circle appropriate capacity):

☐ COA member ☐ ABFSE Staff ☐ Permanent Team Chair ☐ Site Visitor

Date(s)

Committee on Accreditation meeting _____
Location

or

Site/focus visit _____
School

Conflict of Interest

All members of the Committee on Accreditation, the Permanent Team Chairs, all site Visit Team Members, and employees of the ABFSE/COA must review the ABFSE Conflict of Interest Policy.

The Conflict of Interest prohibitions appear in Chapter X, Section C, page 10-1 of the *Accreditation and Policy Manual*. The section is restated below.

C. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Real as well as perceived conflicts will be avoided.

1. Selection of Site Visitors:

- a. No individual who has served as consultant to a program may serve as a site visitor to that program.
- b. No personnel from programs potentially in direct competition with the program being evaluated may serve on the site visit team.
- c. No recent (within 5 years) graduate nor recent faculty member (within 5 years) of the program being evaluated may serve on the site visit team.
- d. No faculty members or practitioners from within the same state in which the evaluated program is located may serve on the site visit team.
- e. No faculty member from within institutions in the same systems as the program being evaluated may serve on the visiting committee.
- f. Except for focused visits, no member of the Committee on Accreditation or the ABFSE chairperson may serve on the site visit team.

2. Site Visit Behavior: Site visitors are prohibited from using the site visit as either an employment opportunity for themselves or to hire faculty away from the program being evaluated.

3. Voting by Committee on Accreditation Members: Members must abstain from voting and from the discussion if they have a real or perceived Conflict of Interest. Committee members from within the state of the program being evaluated may not make motions, participate in the discussion, or vote concerning that program. Committee members employed by the program being evaluated or any other program within the same educational system must absent themselves during the executive session and voting concerning that program.

4. Persons serving as consultants, administrative staff, or in any other way serving the committee shall avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest and shall follow all policies listed in #1-3 above. Members of the Committee on Accreditation, visiting committees and employees of the ABFSE will be expected to sign a Conflict of Interest statement. (See Appendix G)

APPENDIX H

FORMAL REVIEW OF STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

APPENDIX H

Formal Review of Standards of Accreditation **(See Also Chapter 10, Section F, page 10-3 of the *Accreditation and Policy Manual*)**

Although the Committee on Accreditation may review the Standards, either in their totality or individually more frequently, a full review of all Standards will occur every five years. The full review will follow the process indicated below:

1. Every five years (beginning in 2007) at its spring meeting the COA will formally initiate the review process. (It will continue at intervals of five years thereafter [i.e., 2012, 2017, 2022, etc.]).
2. Following the spring meeting, the Executive Director will send letters (in electronic format) to the groups/agencies/individuals indicated in numbers 3 and 4 below along with a copy of this Appendix, the timeline noted herein, and a copy of the Standards along with the web address for the Accreditation and Policy Manual. The letters will include a request that each addressee and appropriate constituencies of the addressee formally review each Standard and advise the COA, through the Executive Director, whether the Standard appear appropriate as written, whether changes appear to be in order, or whether Standard should be deleted. In addition, each respondent will be asked to propose any new Standards.
3. Letters, in electronic format, will go to each president or chief executive of an institution which offers an ABFSE accredited funeral service program, each funeral service program director at those institutions, the president (or other appropriate leadership position) of the student funeral service association, the funeral service/mortuary science faculty association president or appropriate leadership position, and the funeral service/mortuary science staff senate president (or other appropriate staff officer). Each recipient will be asked to widely share and publicize to his/he constituency the request for broad participation in the review of the Standards.
4. In addition, the Executive Director will send a similar letter and related materials to the Executive Directors of the ICFSEB, the NFDA, the NFD&MA, and the ICCFA asking for similarly broad dissemination, including publication in their newsletters or magazines.
5. A notice with comparable information will be placed on the ABFSE web site.
6. All such notices will request that responses be received in the ABFSE office not later than the following September 1 and note a strong preference that all responses be in electronic format.
7. All responses will be distributed to members of the COA prior to their fall meeting.
8. The COA will consider all responses and draft proposed changes which will be distributed to those recipients noted above with a request for any secondary comments. The proposed changes will also be posted on the ABFSE web site with a request for further comment. Such notices will advise all recipients that the COA will take formal action in regard to the items at its following spring meeting. Any responses received as a result of this item will be distributed to COA members prior to the spring meeting.
9. Any changes to the Standards which occur at the referenced spring meeting will be distributed to all recipients noted above within 30 days after adoption by the COA. Changes will also be published on the ABFSE web site.

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APPENDIX I

**ADVERTISING AND STUDENT
RECRUITMENT**

1 Accreditation Standards 3 and 9 require that programs/institutions have statements to show that they follow ethical
2 practices in student admission and other student-related matters. Programs/institutions must publish either their own
3 statement regarding such practices or specifically refer in program materials to their adherence to recognized documents
4 on ethical practice such as those available from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions
5 Offices (AACRAO) or from one of the regional accrediting agencies. In order to provide examples, ABFSE has
6 reprinted below the policy statements from AACRAO and SACS COC. Programs and institutions seeking to develop
7 an appropriate policy dealing with student admissions and related matters may find these to be a useful resource.

8

Ethics and Practice

The purpose of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is to serve and advance higher education by providing leadership in academic and enrollment services. In the practice of their professions, AACRAO members carry responsibilities for conduct that balance societal, institutional, individual, and professional interests.

To guide its members, AACRAO has adopted the following principles of professional ethics and practice in academic and enrollment services. AACRAO members shall:

- Conduct themselves with integrity, fairness, honesty, and respect for others;
- Avoid conflicts between personal interests and professional responsibilities, and resolve perceived conflicts through full disclosure and independent review;
- Dispense complete, accurate, understandable, and truthful information and advice at all times.

In light of these ethical principles, AACRAO has adopted the following standards of professional practice. AACRAO members shall:

- Serve and advance higher education by safeguarding the academic integrity of their institutions;
- Protect the legitimate privacy interests of all individuals and maintain appropriate confidentiality of institutional and student education records;
- Advance institutional interests through the competent practice of the profession;
- Act as stewards and objective enforcers of institutional policies and practices;
- Promote institutional policies and practices that conform with this statement, especially when existing policies or practices are in conflict with it;
- Promote broad and equal access to higher education for qualified students;
- Adhere to principles of nondiscrimination and equality within the framework of institutional mission and prevailing law ;
- Assist students to develop their talents and interests and become responsible citizens;
- Provide to prospective students and their families accurate interpretations of institutional admissions criteria, transfer credit policies, costs, financial aid availability, and educational offerings;
- Recruit distinct student populations (international students, students with learning disabilities, etc.) only when appropriate institutional resources and commitment to serve those populations are in place;
- Avoid practices in the recruitment and enrollment of international students that would not be ethical in the recruitment or enrollment of domestic students;
- Ensure that information management systems protect and maintain the integrity, confidentiality, and security of institutional records;

- Provide accurate interpretations of institutional records;
- Exercise sound management principles, using institutional resources effectively and efficiently;
- Remain knowledgeable of current principles and practices of the profession;
- Contribute to the continuing advancement of the professions;
- Encourage the professional development of individuals at all levels of academic and enrollment services;
- Ensure that contractors and other third-parties involved in the delivery of academic and enrollment services adhere to the principles articulated in this statement;
- Adhere to the principles articulated in this statement.

- *Reviewed by the Board of Directors Governance Committee, no changes - Winter 2016*
- *Adopted by the AACRAO Board of Directors—December 3, 2009*
- *Amended by the AACRAO Board of Directors—March 31, 2010*
- *Ratified by AACRAO Members—April 23, 2010*

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*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

ADVERTISING AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Policy Statement

All accredited higher education institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in student advertising and recruitment. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

Advertising, Publications, Promotional Literature

1. Educational programs and services offered by the institution are the primary emphasis of all advertisements, publications, promotional literature, and recruitment activities.
2. All statements and representations are clear, factually accurate, and current. Supporting information is kept on file and readily available for review. In the case of programs that are awaiting SACSCOC's approval and inclusion in the institution's accreditation, the institution's communication with both external and internal constituencies clearly and consistently represent the program(s) as "pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges."
3. Official publications are readily available and, where appropriate, accurately depict:
 - institutional purposes and goals
 - admission and enrollment requirements and procedures for all types of students (e.g., first-year, transfer students, dual enrollment, transient, etc.) and basic information on programs and courses, with required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated
 - general education requirements
 - special programs, including international study, credit by examination or advanced placement
 - institutional facilities readily available for educational use
 - rules and regulations for conduct
 - tuition, fees, and other program costs, including any fees associated with verification of student identity related to distance or correspondence education
 - opportunities and requirements for financial aid
 - policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw
 - current academic calendars and grading policies

4. In official publications describing career opportunities, clear and accurate information is provided on any unique requirements for career paths, or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described.

Student Recruitment for Admissions

1. Student recruitment is conducted by well-qualified admissions officers and trained volunteers whose credentials, purposes, and position or affiliation with the institution is clearly specified.
2. Independent contractors or agents used by the institution for recruiting purposes are governed by the same principles as institutional employees.
3. Institutions are required to follow federal guidelines regarding compensation for student recruitment and admission activities.
4. Institutions avoid the following recruitment practices in order to comply with the *Principles of Accreditation* and U.S. Department of Education regulations:
 - a. assuring employment unless employment arrangements have been made and can be verified,
 - b. misrepresenting job placement and employment opportunities for graduates,
 - c. misrepresenting program costs,
 - d. disparaging comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions,
 - e. misrepresenting abilities required to complete intended program, and
 - f. offering money or inducements other than educational services of the institution in exchange for student enrollment. (Except for awards of privately endowed restricted funds, grants or scholarships are to be offered only on the basis of specific criteria related to merit or financial need.)

Document History

Approved as a Guideline: Executive Council, June 1985
Edited in accordance with the Principles of Accreditation: June 2004
Updated in accord with the revised Principles: December 2006
Approved Revision as a Policy: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2014
Revised: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2017
Reformatted: August 2018

APPENDIX J

Considerations for calculation of:

NBE pass rate
Graduation rate
Job placement rate

APPENDIX J

NBE Pass Rate Calculations

The Committee on Accreditation recognizes that students who take the NBE 12 months or more after completion of formal instruction may have a diminished capacity for success on the NBE and may fail the test. Such failures may reflect the delay in taking the test rather than the current instructional success of the program. In order to obtain accurate outcomes assessment for current program evaluation, the COA will consider exemptions to the NBE pass rate for failures in the following situation:

When a student graduates but does not take the NBE within one year of completing the graduation requirements, the program director may request an exemption of that student's NBE results from the current year's NBE Pass Rate Calculation. The written exemption request must include:

1. Printed on school letterhead
Signed by Program Director
Identify the student(s) by name and ID number.
2. Verify date that NBE Arts & Sciences were taken
3. An official transcript* with graduation posted. This transcript must demonstrate that no **funeral program** course work (with the exception of an *optional* NBE review course) was completed during a 12 month period prior to taking the first section of the NBE.
4. A college catalog to establish the graduation requirements pertaining to the student

The ABFSE office will establish due dates for submission of documentation. Based on current procedures for receipt of NBE results, documentation must be **received by March 1** in order to be considered.

*Due to the constraints regarding release of official transcripts, the Executive Director has the discretion to accept an unofficial copy of the transcript, signed and dated by the Program Director, as long as such copy demonstrates the semester(s) during which courses were taken.

The Executive Director will determine the accuracy of the requests to adjust NBE pass rates. Questionable requests will be referred to the COA for action. There will be no retroactive adjustments after the due date and no adjustments will be made to previous year statistics.

The revised NBE Pass Rates are to be used by the institution in all public presentations of data involving NBE pass rates, including the program website. Revised NBE Pass Rates will be utilized when calculating 3 year average NBE pass rates posted in the Directory of Programs on the ABFSE website.

Providing Exemption Request info in a format similar to the example below is helpful.

Student	ID number	date taken		graduation date
		Arts	Sciences	

note:

Only 1 college catalog is necessary per graduation year.

Catalog is to verify graduation requirements that apply to the named student(s) in the exemption request.

For example, if the exemption request covers 3 students from 2018, then only 1 catalog excerpt is necessary.

But, if there are 3 exemption requests and each student graduated in a different year, verification of applicable graduation requirements is necessary.

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Graduation Rate Calculations

The Committee on Accreditation recognizes that students complete their education at different paces. (i.e. full-time v. part-time)

ABFSE accreditation standards regarding graduation rates are written with the full-time student in mind.

As a result, the following will be considered in reporting graduation rates:

- Part-time students will be identified in the cohort tracking process
- The program will identify the part-time option(s) that are available and the projected amount of time for on-time completion as a part-time student.
- Students completing the part-time program in 1 ½ times projected program length will be identified as on-time graduates.

Program director will document the part-time program completion in the following manner:

Identify graduates completing the program on part-time basis

Notification on school letterhead

Signed by Program Director

Copy of an official college publication (excerpts) to establish the graduation requirements pertaining to part-time students

Documentation must be **received by March 1.**

Employment Rate Calculation

The Committee on Accreditation recognizes that students have multiple career options available upon graduation.

Standard 10.3.3 identifies the manner in which the job placement rate is to be calculated.

The ABFSE Directory will identify total job placement and funeral service related job placement.

10.3.3 Employment rates: Graduate employment data must be provided 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 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.

All graduates will be considered in the total job placement rate.

Total job placement and funeral service related placement rates will be the same only when all graduates have Funeral Service employment.

Job placement data may be updated one time during the next calendar year upon written notification to the ABFSE office, if a survey 6 months following graduation provides significant updates.

Written notification will be considered a letter

Printed on school letterhead

Signed by Program Director

Requests to adjust job placement rate must be **received by March 1 or August 1.**

APPENDIX K

APPLICATION FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

**ABFSE/COA
COVER SHEET AND APPLICATION FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE
IN AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OR PROGRAM**

Director's Name: _____ Telephone: _____
 Institution/Program Name: _____ Fax: _____
 Site Address: Street _____ City, State, Zip: _____
 Mailing Address (if different) _____ Email: _____

A request for Substantive Change must be submitted to and approved by the COA before the change is included in the scope of accreditation of the institution/program.

DATE OF THIS REPORT

EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGE

INSTRUCTIONS: Indicate the type of Substantive Change proposed and answer the questions at the bottom of this page. Then complete the appropriate form (see following pages) and supply required documentation. Submit the fee (see page K-12) and two copies of these documents to the ABFSE office. If a site visit is required, the program/institution will be responsible for all expenses incurred.

Check all that apply:

☐	1. Change in legal name	☐	6. Change in ownership/control
☐	2. Change in mission or objectives	☐	7. Relocation of permanent instructional site
☐	3. Change in faculty/staff: ☐ Director ☐ 60% of faculty (1 calendar year)	☐	8. Application for approval of additional location(s) (see Chapter X.I)
☐	4. Program Closing (see Chapter X.J. – Teach-out plans)	☐	9. Addition of courses/programs/degrees/DE significantly different from existing offerings or delivery
☐	5. Greater than 25% increase in number of credit hours awarded	☐	10. Change in President/CEO
☐		☐	11. Change of Accreditor/Accreditation Status

QUESTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Reason(s) for the change _____

Who participated in the decision to make the change and/or request approval for it? _____

By what process was the decision accomplished? _____

Other comments: _____

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Submission of the Request for Approval of Substantive Change is in partial fulfillment of the COA's requirements for true and accurate description of the change. Supporting documentation is attached.

SIGNATURE OF PROGRAM DIRECTOR

DATE

CHANGE 1: LEGAL NAME

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and the information required by this section.

Former Name of Institution/Program: _____

New Name of Institution/Program: _____

List licenses required for operation in your state and affected by the name change:

If other aspects of the institution/program are affected by the name change, describe briefly:

ATTACHMENTS (Identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. COPY OF LEGAL AUTHORIZATION FOR THE CHANGE OF NAME
- ☐ 2. COPIES OF REVISED GOVERNMENTAL LICENSES IN THE NEW NAME
- ☐ 3. PUBLICITY MATERIALS (revised to show name change)

CHANGE 2: MISSION OR OBJECTIVES

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and the information required by this section.

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (Identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. COPIES OF BOTH THE PREVIOUS AND REVISED VERSIONS OF THE MISSION STATEMENT AND/OR OBJECTIVES
- ☐ 2. REVISED MATERIALS IN WHICH MISSION STATEMENT AND/OR OBJECTIVES APPEAR (e.g., brochure, student handbook, etc.)

CHANGE 3: FACULTY/STAFF

1 **Instructions:** Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and the information required by this section.

2 ☐ Change in Director:

Name of Former Director: _____

New Director:

Name	Phone	Email
------	-------	-------

Phone

Email

Mailing Address	Fax
-----------------	-----

Fax

NOTE: The COA must be informed within thirty (30) days of **any** change in director, even if it is temporary.

6 ☐ **Change in 60% or more of the faculty during one program cycle:**

Which degree program is affected?

NEW FACULTY NAME(S)

JOB TITLE(S)

PERSON(S) REPLACED

0 Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the
1 institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as
2 appropriate.

3 Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

4 **ATTACHMENTS:** For each new director and new faculty member: resume, copy of license, copies of
5 transcripts, current job description (if revised for new faculty, include previous version).

CHANGE 4: PROGRAM CLOSING

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

List degree programs affected: _____

Briefly describe the proposed change: _____

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Faculty | |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ **1. CALENDARS (specific timeline for teach-out)**
- ☐ **2. TEACH-OUT PLAN (indicate courses to be offered, credit hours, semester, sample schedule, proposed instructor)**
- ☐ **3. PUBLICATIONS (showing appropriate disclosure of pertinent information)**
- ☐ **4. LETTER OF VERIFICATION from credit-granting institution or college/university**
Department Chair

Additional comments/explanations:

**CHANGE 5: GREATER THAN 25% INCREASE IN NUMBER OF
CREDIT HOURS AWARDED**

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

List degree programs affected: _____

Briefly describe the proposed change: _____

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ **1. CALENDARS (previous and revised, showing credit hours, content, instruction and total)**
- ☐ **2. BUDGETS (previous and revised)**
- ☐ **3. PUBLICATIONS (showing appropriate revision or pertinent information)**
- ☐ **4. RENT/LEASE AGREEMENT (if different from previous Self Study)**
 - ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ **5. LETTER OF VERIFICATION from credit-granting institution or college/university**
Department Chair

Additional comments/explanations:

CHANGE 6: OWNERSHIP/CONTROL

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

Organization/Control currently: ☐ Non-profit ☐ For-profit

Date by which the change is expected to be complete: _____

Type of change:

- ☐ Change in legal status: ☐ form of organization ☐ authorization to operate
- ☐ Change in control (ownership/controlling interest) through
 - ☐ Sale of institution
 - ☐ Acquisition of another institution or program/location of another institution
 - ☐ Transfer of controlling interest of stock of the institution or its parent corporation
 - ☐ Merger of two or more institutions
 - ☐ Division of one institution into two or more institutions
 - ☐ Transfer of assets that comprise a substantial portion of the educational business of the institution
 - ☐ Conversion of the institution into two or more institutions
 - ☐ Change from non-profit to for-profit

Excluded transactions: Upon the retirement or death of the owner:

- ☐ Transfer to a member of the owner's family
- ☐ Transfer to a person with ownership interest who has been involved in the management of the institution for at least two (2) years preceding the transfer.

Briefly describe the change (from/to; names of parties involved, etc.):

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. LEGAL REGISTRATION (STATE) FOR NEW STRUCTURE OR OWNERSHIP
- ☐ 2. STATE POSTSECONDARY AUTHORIZATION or date of application:

- ☐ 3. VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEW STRUCTURE/ OWNERSHIP

NOTE: A one-day site visit is required within six (6) months of the effective date of change and the COA must be informed within thirty (30) days of a change in ownership.

CHANGE 7: RELOCATION OF PERMANENT INSTRUCTIONAL SITE*

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

Effective date of change: _____

Old Address: _____

New Address: _____

Brief explanation/description of change: _____

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. LICENSING/AUTHORIZATIONS (covering new address)
- ☐ 2. PUBLICATIONS (revised to reflect change)
- ☐ 3. RENT/LEASE/USE AGREEMENT OR PROOF OF OWNERSHIP FOR NEW FACILITY
- ☐ 4. FLOOR DIAGRAMS FOR OLD AND NEW FACILITIES (include scale drawing; dimensions)
- ☐ 5. RENT/LEASE/USE AGREEMENT FOR EDUCATION MATERIALS/OFFICE EQUIPMENT (If applicable)

NOTE: A one-day site visit is required within six (6) months of the effective date of change.

* This substantive change applies to instructional site relocation only. If only the institution's/program's office is relocating, the COA and all enrolled students must be informed by mail within fifteen (15) days of the change.

CHANGE 8: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

Type of site: ☐ Branch Campus* ☐ Additional Location ☐ Contract Site

- ☐ The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.

Degree(s) to be offered at new site: _____

If this is a contract site, beginning and ending dates of the contract are as follows:

_____ Through _____

Other additional locations of the institution/program at this level currently approved: (Use an additional page if necessary):

1. _____ 2. _____

Additional (new) location for which approval is requested:

Name of Site: _____

Site Administrator _____ Site Phone: _____

Street Address: _____ Fax: _____

City, State Zip: _____ Email: _____

Institution/program director for new site: _____

Percentage of content to be offered at new site: _____

If less than 100% of content, list components to be offered:

List state and local licenses required for the new site: _____

If licensing is required but not completed:

Date you applied _____ Date by which completion is expected: _____

Number of students expected at new site _____ Student-instruction ratio: _____

* See Chapter X, I

(continued on page K-9)

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. **CONTRACT WITH HOST SCHOOL OR AGENCY (does not apply to Branch Campuses)**
 - ☐ Check here if facility is institution-owned
- ☐ 2. **FACULTY TEACHING LOAD (complete the chart below)***
- ☐ 3. **STATE AND LOCAL LICENSES FOR NEW SITE**
- ☐ 4. **SCHEDULE FOR ALL CURRENT DEGREE PROGRAM(S) AND ADDITIONAL SITES (include: name of site, degree program(s), and director)**
- ☐ 5. **CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (show where new site fits into structure)**
- ☐ 6. **PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE FOR NEW SITE (include date(s) released)**
- ☐ 7. **BUDGET (show: total budget amount, with breakdown by column for each degree program and additional site, including projection for new site)**
- ☐ 8. **RESUMES FOR FACULTY MEMBERS (identify job title for each, including curriculum area for instructors)**
- ☐ 9. **FLOOR DIAGRAM FOR SPACE TO BE USED AT NEW SITE (to scale, with dimensions)**
- ☐ 10. **RENT/LEASE/USE AGREEMENT FOR FACILITY SPACE**
- ☐ 11. **LIST OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED FOR DURATION OF PROGRAM**
- ☐ 12. **RENT/LEASE AGREEMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**
- ☐ 13. **SUMMARY TABLE FOR PROGRAM(S) OFFERED AT NEW SITE (component title [and number, if appropriate], hours, inclusive dates, instructor, position in program cycle)**
- ☐ 14. **SCHEDULES FOR PROGRAM(S) OFFERED AT NEW SITE (academic calendars: schedule of daily hours and content for academic phase; seminar schedule dates, hours, content)**
- ☐ 15. **SYLLABUS (if altered or revised since most recent Self study Report)**
- ☐ 16. **LIST OF CLINICAL SITES (name, address, telephone, supervising teacher)**

* Complete the following chart for all instructors scheduled for the new site. List all teaching responsibilities, including those at other sites operated by the institution/program.)

FACULTY MEMBER	SUBJECT AREAS(S) & /CREDIT HOURS FOR ALL SITES AND LEVELS		
Name	New Site	Other Site(s)	A = Additional C = Contract B = Branch M – Mobile P= Primary

NOTE: Approval by the COA is required PRIOR TO THE SITE'S OPENING and a site visit is required within six (6) months of the effective date of change.
(continued on page K-10)

The following types of substantive change requirements apply to institutions with recognition by the COA that allows them to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA programs. Please check the appropriate box. In addition to the requirements below, submission of all attachments listed on page K-9 of this application form are also required. A one-day, site visit will be required within six (6) months of the effective date of change.

- ☐ Entering into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers more than 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.
- ☐ Establishing an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program. The addition of such a location must be approved by the COA unless the COA determines, and issues a written statement that the institution has –
 - Successfully completed at least one cycle of accreditation of the maximum length offered by the COA and one renewal, or has been accredited for at least ten years.
 - At least three additional locations that the COA has approved; and
 - Met criteria established by the COA indicating sufficient capacity to add additional locations without individual prior approvals, including at a minimum, satisfactory evidence of a system to ensure quality across a distributed enterprise that includes--
 - a) Clearly identified academic control;
 - b) Regular evaluation of the locations;
 - c) Adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems;
 - d) Financial stability; and
 - e) Long-range planning for expansion

The COA's procedures for approval of an additional location require timely reporting to the COA of every additional location established under this approval.

The COA's determination or re-determination to pre-approve an institution's addition of locations may not exceed five years.

The COA will not pre-approve an institution's addition of locations after the institution undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control until the institution demonstrates that it meets the conditions for the COA to pre-approve additional locations described in this section.

The COA will conduct, at reasonable intervals not to exceed the normal period of accreditation, visits to a representative sample of additional locations utilizing the substantive change application procedures described above.

**CHANGE 9: ADDITION OF COURSES/PROGRAMS/DEGREES/DISTANCE EDUCATION
SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM EXISTING OFFERINGS OR DELIVERY**

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and information required by this section.

List degree(s), courses(s), or programs to be added:

Briefly describe the proposed changes:

Evaluation of impact of the change: With reference to the ABFSE Accreditation Standards, indicate all aspects of the institution that will be affected and attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

ATTACHMENTS (identified by number as follows):

- ☐ 1. PUBLICATIONS (showing appropriate revision of pertinent information)
- ☐ 2. BUDGETS (previous and revised)
- ☐ 3. PERSONNEL (resumes for new faculty)
- ☐ 4. RENT/LEASE AGREEMENT (if different from most recent Self study Report)
- ☐ 5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (list of new equipment, library, etc.)
- ☐ 6. ALL APPLICABLE CURRICULUM INFORMATION REQUIRED BY STANDARD 6; Distance Education requires Appendix E completed in Weave (effective January 2021)
- ☐ 7. STATE LEGAL REGISTRATION AND POSTSECONDARY AUTHORIZATION
- ☐ 8. ASSESSMENT: New assessment forms and sample transcript

***NOTE: A one-day, site visit is required within six (6) months of the effective change date.** (e.g. When distance courses are populated with students.)

CHANGE 10: PRESIDENT/CEO

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and the information required by this section.

☐ **Change in President or CEO:**

Name of Former President/CEO: _____

New President/CEO: _____

Name

Email

Institution

Telephone

Mailing Address

Fax

*NOTE: The COA must be informed within thirty (30) days of **any** change in President or CEO, even if it is temporary.*
In certain situations, ABFSE must be able to communicate directly with the CEO of the institution.

Evaluation of impact of the change in the context of the ABFSE Accreditation Standards.
(This is for reporting purposes only.)

**CHANGE 11: NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF ACCREDITOR/CHANGE OF
ACCREDITATION STATUS.**

Instructions: Complete the Substantive Change Cover Sheet and the information required by this section.

____ Change of accreditor. Complete 1-4 below.

____ Change of accreditation status. Complete 1, 3, 5-7 below.

(any adverse/negative action cited by the institution's regional (or other) accreditor, including the Department of Education or CHEA, must be reported to COA)

1. Name of original accrediting agency. _____

2. Name of new accrediting agency. _____

3. Effective date of change. _____

4. Briefly explain reason(s) for the change. _____

5. Briefly describe the adverse/negative action cited by the applicable agency. _____

6. Evaluation of the impact of the adverse action on the potential to comply with ABFSE Accreditation Standards:
Indicate which ABFSE standards have the potential to be affected by the adverse action.
Attach a detailed narrative explanation for each, with supporting documentation, as appropriate.

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Structure, Organization, and Administration | ☐ Students |
| ☐ Program Learning Outcomes | ☐ Program Planning and Evaluation/Assessment |
| ☐ Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards | ☐ Default Rates in Student Loan Programs under Title IV and Compliance with Title IV |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Program Responsibilities |
| ☐ Curriculum | ☐ Program Length, Tuition, and Fees Must Relate to Subject Matter |
| ☐ Faculty | ☐ Program Length in Credit Hours |
| ☐ Facilities | |
| ☐ Library/Learning Resources | |

7. Briefly describe the institution's response to the cited action(s). _____

ATTACHMENTS (Supporting documents to identify the adverse action and describe the impact of the change and/or the institutional response.)

**ABFSE/COA
APPLICATION FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE
IN AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OR PROGRAM**

SCHEDULE OF FEES

CHANGE 1: LEGAL NAME	\$150
CHANGE 2: MISSION OR OBJECTIVES	n/a
CHANGE 3: FACULTY/STAFF	n/a
CHANGE 4: PROGRAM CLOSING	n/a
CHANGE 5: GREATER THAN 25% INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS AWARDED	\$150
CHANGE 6: OWNERSHIP/CONTROL *	\$300 plus cost of the visit
CHANGE 7: RELOCATION OF PERMANENT INSTRUCTIONAL SITE *	\$300 plus cost of the visit
CHANGE 8: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS *	\$250 per location plus cost of the visit
CHANGE 9: ADDITION OF COURSES/PROGRAMS/DEGREES/DISTANCE EDUCATION SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM EXISTING OFFERINGS OR DELIVERY *	\$500 per location plus cost of the visit
CHANGE 10: PRESIDENT or CEO	n/a
CHANGE 11: ACCREDITOR/ACCREDITATION STATUS	n/a unless accreditation status change requires site visit

*** These Substantive Changes require a site visit.
Institution will be billed for the cost of the visit in accordance with Appendix D.**

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APPENDIX L

**DOCUMENT RETENTION
AND DESTRUCTION
POLICY**

APPENDIX L

ABFSE Document Retention and Destruction Policy

Approved October 2015

The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) as a 501.C.3 non-profit corporation engaged in accreditation of educational programs maintains traditional business records and documents relative to the accreditation function. This policy is intended to comply with relevant law, including the IRS, and ABFSE accreditation policies as defined in the ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual. The policy ensures that valuable documents are available when needed and the proper disposal of documents that are no longer necessary. Policy also complies with Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Policies as defined by ARMA (Association of Records Managers and Administrators)

Procedures

- **Business Income Tax Returns and Supporting Documents.** A final copy of business income tax returns and related correspondence with the IRS will be maintained permanently. Supportive tax records will be maintained for 7 years.
- **Employment Tax Records.** Employment tax records will be maintained for 4 years after the date taxes were due or were paid, whichever is later. These employment tax records include employer identification number, amounts and dates of wage and retirement payments and tax deposits, the names, addresses, social security numbers, dates of employment and occupations of employees and records of allocated tips and fringe benefits.
- **Business Asset Records.** Business asset records will be maintained in a safe deposit box until the property is sold or otherwise properly disposed.
- **Business Ledgers and Other Key Documents.** Major business documents, i.e. annual reports, corporate by-laws and amendments, Board of Director information, annual meeting minutes and business formation documents, will be retained on a permanent basis. Profit and loss and other financial statements will be retained on a permanent basis. Journal entries check registers; general business ledgers including accounts payable/receivable ledgers will be retained for 7 years. Invoices and expense reports will be retained for 7 years unless site visit/accreditation policy supersedes.
- **Human Resources Files.** Excluding employment tax records, files relating to current employees should be retained while they are working and for 7 years after a current or former employee has left or been terminated. This includes records of employee benefits, i.e. Simple IRA.
 - For job applicants, who were not hired, keep files for 3 years.
 - If an employee suffers an accident on the job, retain pertinent documentation for 7 years after that matter is resolved or 10 years after which any workers compensation benefits are paid or as mandated by OSHA.
 - If an employee lodges a discrimination claim, retain records for 4 years after the case is finally concluded.
- **Cancelled Checks.** Destroy paper copies after 7 years.
- **Bank Account and Credit Card Statements.** Retained detailed annual statements for 7 years. Dispose of underlying monthly statements after 24 months.
- **ABFSE File Maintenance.** For each accredited program the ABFSE office shall maintain on file at least the last two full accreditation and/or pre-accreditation reviews. This shall include the last two committee reports, periodic review reports, if any, institutional responses to reports, special reviews, if any, responses to stipulations, if any, and committee final actions. The file shall also contain the most recent Self study Report. In addition, the written record of all decisions made throughout an institution's or program's affiliation with the COA regarding its candidacy, accreditation, and any substantive changes -- including all correspondence that is significantly related to those decisions -- will be maintained in the ABFSE office.
- ABFSE is not the repository of any current student files. However, ABFSE is responsible for academic records from certain closed institutions (for which ABFSE became repository of documents under Standard 10.5.3) and

1 thus subject to FERPA guidelines. FERPA does not provide specific requirements for educational agencies and
2 institutions regarding disposition or destruction of the data they collect or maintain themselves, other than requiring
3 safeguard of FERPA-protected data from unauthorized disclosure, and not to destroy any education records if there
4 is an outstanding request to inspect or review them.
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- 6 • Student Scholarship applications and faculty credentials may contain personally identifiable information. Self study
7 Reports, Team reports, COA notes and minutes contain sensitive data. This data will be purged and/or destroyed at
8 the conclusion of the useful life.
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APPENDIX M

**STEPS FOR CANDIDACY AND
SAMPLE TIMELINE**

APPENDIX M

Steps for Candidacy and Sample Timeline

Steps for Candidacy

Step 1: Interested institution contacts ABFSE office for info.
Provides specific contact information (at minimum, name of contact person, institution, location, phone and email).

Institutions may find it desirable to hire a consultant familiar with ABFSE accreditation to assist with the Candidacy process.

Step 2: Visit to school by Executive Director (and team chair or COA member) prior to the submission of an application for Candidacy.

Step 3: At least 90 days prior to a scheduled COA meeting (April and October)

Notify the ABFSE office of intent to submit a Candidacy application for review at the scheduled meeting to ensure inclusion on the agenda.

Step 4: At least 60 days prior to a scheduled COA meeting (April and October)

Submit Application (Form B-1 in Appendix B of Manual)

Submit Self study (feasibility) document

Submit Candidacy fee

After Self study document is reviewed and is determined to be complete, a 3-person site visit team is assigned.

Step 5: Site visit

Step 6: Candidacy Application, Feasibility Self Study document, Site visit team report and school response to site visit are viewed at a regular meeting of COA.

School representatives are expected to be present to answer questions.

Note: Purchase ABFSE Curriculum Outlines is part of the Candidacy fees. Many schools do this in a 2-step process:

1. Purchase outlines

2. Remainder of fee with Candidacy application.

(There is no prescribed point in the process where acquisition of outlines must be done. However, the self study does require completion of a curriculum distribution form which will be difficult to accomplish without the curriculum outlines.)

Sample Timeline:

Year 1

Fall - Contact ABFSE office and Executive Director

January - March - Executive Director Visit

Assumes institution has done necessary investigation of demand for program, industry support and state licensing expectations.

July - notify ABFSE office that Candidacy application is forthcoming and request consideration on next COA meeting agenda

August 1 - submit Candidacy Self study/Feasibility Study

October meeting - COA review and accepts SS

Year 2

Fall - site visit team schedule for winter site

April - COA reviews site visit team report, school response and meets with school representatives.

Potential for Candidacy to be approved.

Year 3

Program prepares for Initial Accreditation SS and prepares for Initial Accreditation site visit.
(students must be enrolled in practical embalming course)

April - Initial Accreditation site visit report evaluated by COA and COA meets school representatives.

Potential for Initial Accreditation to be approved.