

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

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ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, and ADMINISTRATION

- 1.1 The institution must provide evidence that it assumes responsibility for:
 - 1.1.1 curriculum content,
 - 1.1.2 classroom teaching, distance instruction, clinical education, including clinical field experience,
 - 1.1.3 appointment and evaluation of faculty,
 - 1.1.4 policies and procedures for institutional admission, as well as program admission if that process differs,
 - 1.1.5 approval by the appropriate governing authority in which it is located or within which it offers instruction to award the diploma, certificate and/or degree(s) for which it seeks accreditation, and
 - 1.1.6 awarding a diploma, certificate, or degree documenting completion of the program based upon the federal definition of credit hour (see Standard 13).
- 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.
 - 1.3.3 Programs must have an advisory board and maintain minutes of its meetings since the last comprehensive review.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The administration of the institution and/or program must:
 - 1.5.1 provide educational leadership to establish good learning opportunities for students,
 - 1.5.2 create working conditions that support faculty productivity
 - 1.5.3 establish an expeditious process allowing for communication flow both downward and upward within the organization in order for the administration to assess the achievements of its goals and the needs of its constituents;
- 1.6 An institution must have a published mission and demonstrate student success relative to that mission.
- 1.7 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.
 - 1.7.1 A single purpose institution must be administered by a chief administrative officer, directly accountable only to the governing board for the management of the institution. All other employees must report directly, or indirectly, to this chief administrative officer.
 - 1.7.1.a This officer may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced commensurate with administrative duties.
 - 1.7.2 A program within a multi-purpose institution must be administered by a program director (or comparable title) who has been delegated responsibility for the program. All other employees assigned to the program must report directly or indirectly, to this person.
 - 1.7.2.a This director may also be a member of the teaching faculty, as long as the teaching load is reduced commensurate with administrative duties.

- 1.8 The individual directly responsible for the funeral service education program (program director or comparable title) must:
- 1.8.1 be a full-time employee of the institution
 - 1.8.2 be a graduate of an ABFSE accredited program
 - 1.8.3 possess a valid license to practice as a funeral service professional
 - 1.8.4 possess an academic background consistent with the position of leadership held.
 - 1.8.4.a. This will always involve at least the master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university earned within five years of the date of the initial full-time appointment in funeral service education.
 - 1.8.4.b. For program directors earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United States, the institution awarding the degree must have fulfilled governmental standards which in the judgment of American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) are acceptable or similar to those of the ABFSE.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate that the program is authorized to operate where its students reside.

Institutions with 50% or more of their program available through distance education must:

- Demonstrate that distance education is appropriate to the institution's and Funeral Service Program's mission and purposes;
- Demonstrate how distance education is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.

STANDARD 2: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

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

- 2.1.1 Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families and communities they serve.
 - 2.1.2 Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
 - 2.1.3 Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance.
 - 2.1.4 Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains.
 - 2.1.5 Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation and handling of human remains.
 - 2.1.6 Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies.
 - 2.1.7 Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final disposition of human remains.
 - 2.1.8 Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
 - 2.1.9 Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
 - 2.1.10 Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.
- 2.2 The Program Learning Outcomes must be in the published information sources of the program (other than brief marketing materials).
- 2.3 The program must assess the achievement of the Learning Outcomes both in courses and in measurements such as licensing exam pass rates and graduation and employment rates.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate that:

- Distance education is appropriate to the institution's and Funeral Service Program's mission and purposes.
- Curricula for the distance education offerings comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
- Evaluation of distance education offerings occurs, and that evaluation results are used to enhance the program.

STANDARD 3: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

3.1 Each institution and program must conduct their business and academic activities in an ethical manner. In this regard, each institution program must

- 3.1.1 publish and adhere to a personnel policy assuring equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons; maintain admissions, financial aid, and education services policies for students assuring equal consideration without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or veterans status; and
- 3.1.2 ensure that publications and advertising accurately portray the realities of the program and institution.

The catalog of each institution must give as much information as possible to include entire curriculum and program of study containing at least the following:

- 3.1.2.a course names and identification numbers;
- 3.1.2.b summary descriptions and credit hours;
- 3.1.2.c requirements for admission;
- 3.1.2.d requirements and processes for withdrawal and graduation;
- 3.1.2.e academic calendars;
- 3.1.2.f grading policies; and
- 3.1.2.g financial policies for tuition, fees, and refunds.

3.1.3 The institution must maintain proper records and reports as follows:

- 3.1.3.a Adequate and secure filing systems for student academic records must exist and policies must be in place to ensure maintenance of these records in perpetuity.
- 3.1.3.b Program records, such as clinical reports, surveys, affiliation agreements and accreditation-related documents must be maintained from the date of the last comprehensive accreditation visit. Institutional oversight and procedures must be in place to ensure maintenance and continuity of these records when personnel changes take place.
- 3.1.3.c Student academic transcripts must indicate the quality of the student's work in each course and the extent of each course, expressed in either semester or quarter credits. Grading systems must be explained on the transcript.
- 3.1.3.d In the event a program ceases to function, maintenance of student and program records in perpetuity must be ensured.

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

Programs in a multi-purpose institution will use:

The (name of the 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

When ABFSE serves as ‘gatekeeper’ for the single purpose institution the statement should read: (name of sponsoring institution) and the (name of the 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

NOTE: The reference to accreditation must name the specific program accredited by the ABFSE. If the institution offers more than one degree (or its equivalent) program accredited by ABFSE, the names of all accredited programs must appear in the accreditation statement. (This requirement is particularly important in those institutions offering other areas of instruction which are not accredited, or eligible for accreditation, by the ABFSE.)

- 3.3 ABFSE accredited institutions or programs which choose to offer, in addition to one or more accredited programs, unaccreditable programs must comply with the following procedures:
- 3.3.1 Publications describing the unaccreditable program must contain the following information:
“This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program are not eligible to take the National Board Examination or any state board examination for which graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required.”
- 3.3.2 In addition, the academic transcript for graduates of unaccreditable programs must carry the statement: “This academic program is designed to meet specific state or professional needs. It is not accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Students graduating from this program are not eligible to take the National Board Examination or any state board examination for which graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is required.”
- 3.3.3 The requirements of Standard 3.3 do not apply to a bachelor degree completion program which requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program as a condition for admission.
- 3.4 Written policies must exist which ensure due process for students, faculty, and staff, including grievance procedures, clearly defined disciplinary policies, and sexual harassment policies.
- 3.4.1 All written student complaints about the program that follow the institution’s or other governing entity’s stated procedure must be available for review.
- 3.4.2 The program must file a written response or demonstrate resolution of complaints that have been received.
- 3.4.3 Written student complaints are to be reported on the Annual Report.
- 3.5 Honesty and integrity are required of all accredited programs and each program will conduct itself in an ethical manner. Violations of ethics include, but are not limited to:
- 3.5.1 Providing false, misleading, or distorted information directly or by omission to the ABFSE or Committee of Accreditation (COA);
- 3.5.2 Engaging in illegal conduct;
- 3.5.3 Presenting false information to students, faculty, staff or the public;
- 3.5.4 Engaging in intentional conduct that is coercive to students or prejudicial to student learning or outcomes
- 3.5.5 Any other conduct that is generally regarded as unethical in higher education, accreditation of educational programs and institutions, or funeral service.
- 3.6 See also Standards 4.1 and 11.2 (if applicable) for additional topics subject to Administrative Practices and Ethical Standards.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must:

- Demonstrate that policies on academic integrity include explicit references to distance education.
- Demonstrate that web-based information about the nature of the distance education environment is available to students.
- Assist students in determining if they possess the skills important to success in distance education.

STANDARD 4: FINANCE

- 4.1 The institution/program must have adequate financial resources to provide instruction and facilities in compliance with this manual and to ensure graduation of each cohort accepted.
- 4.2 The program must have resources budgeted on a continuing basis that are sufficient to provide instruction, current technology, equipment, student and academic support in compliance with this manual's standards.
- 4.3 The institution must have processes in place to address unexpected expenditures.
- 4.4 The Executive Director of the ABFSE must be notified of any unexpected expenditures or revenue short-falls that might impact instruction or compliance with this manual's standards.
- 4.5 A program in a multiple-purpose institution must have program level involvement in the budget development process.
- 4.6 The institution must employ acceptable accounting practices and must provide the most current audited financial statements. Any audit exceptions or advisories that appear in the most recent audit must be reported.
- 4.7 Institutions for which ABFSE is the gatekeeper must demonstrate a ratio of current assets to current liabilities that is at least 1:1 for the most recent fiscal year.
- 4.8 The financial accounting system for institutions must not be combined with financial affairs of any other organizations.
- 4.9 Institutions for whom the ABFSE acts as gatekeeper must maintain copies of all contracts in force since the last comprehensive review.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions and/or Funeral Service Programs in which 50% or more of program requirements are available through distance education must provide sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand the Funeral Service Program's distance education offerings.

STANDARD 5: CURRICULUM

- 5.1 Each program must document curriculum distribution by ABFSE content area by completing Form B-6, (found in Appendix B) "Curriculum Distribution by ABFSE Content Area."
- 5.2 The ABFSE recognizes the Associate Degree, or its equivalent, as the minimum educational standard for preparation for the funeral service profession.
 - 5.2.1 The program must consist of not less than 60 semester (90 quarter) credits.
- 5.3 The program must have and follow an organized curriculum plan.
 - 5.3.1 The plan must follow a logical sequence and result in a diploma or degree appropriate to the length and depth of the curriculum.
 - 5.3.2 Semester or quarter credit hours must be assigned to all courses and apportioned appropriately.
 - 5.3.3 A syllabus must be available for each course offered in the program. Each syllabus must include written course objectives and must be distributed to students at the beginning of that course. The course objectives must be reviewed on a continuing basis.
 - 5.3.4 All required prerequisite courses must be clearly indicated in institutional publications.

- 5.3.5 The program curriculum must consist of at least two components: general education courses and funeral service courses.
 - 5.3.6 At least 25% of the total credits must be in the general education component.
 - 5.3.7 Instruction must be at a level generally held commensurate with postsecondary education and directed toward the individual growth of each student in areas such as independent thought, resourcefulness, and scientific inquiry.
 - 5.3.8 Students must be evaluated at reasonable intervals and kept informed of their progress in a timely manner.
- 5.4 The manner of inclusion of ABFSE stipulated content is left to the individual program to decide, provided the minimum content as stipulated in the following is included. Some of the current ABFSE content areas may be counted toward the general education component, as long as they are not counted toward any other portion of the ABFSE requirements. The minimum requirements for the Funeral Service Education degree program must include:
- 5.4.1 Public Health and Technical 14 minimum semester (21 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:
 - 5.4.1.a Chemistry
 - 5.4.1.b Microbiology
 - 5.4.1.c Human Anatomy
 - 5.4.1.d Pathology
 - 5.4.1.e Restorative Art
 - 5.4.1.f Embalming
 - 5.4.2 Business Management and Professional 16 minimum semester (24 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:
 - 5.4.2.a Accounting
 - 5.4.2.b Funeral Service Management
 - 5.4.2.c Funeral Merchandising
 - 5.4.2.d Cremation
 - 5.4.2.e Funeral Directing
 - 5.4.2.f Small Business Management
 - 5.4.2.g Professional or Business Communications
 - 5.4.2.h Federal Trade Commission
 - 5.4.3 Social Sciences/Humanities 6 minimum semester (9 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve distribution of study in the following content areas:
 - 5.4.3.a Sociology
 - 5.4.3.b History of Funeral Service and Embalming
 - 5.4.3.c Funeral Service Psychology and Counseling
 - 5.4.4 Legal, Ethical, Regulatory 3 minimum semester (4 quarter) credits. The curriculum must involve a distribution of study in the following content areas:
 - 5.4.4.a Funeral Service Law
 - 5.4.4.b Business Law
 - 5.4.4.c Ethics
 - 5.4.5 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.

- 5.4.6 The Embalming is a requirement of the curriculum:
- 5.4.6.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.
- 5.4.6.b Active participation means hands-on learning and must include, at a minimum, the following tasks:
- 5.4.6.b.i raising vessels
 - 5.4.6.b.ii mixing fluids
 - 5.4.6.b.iii injecting fluids
 - 5.4.6.b.iv cavity treatment
 - 5.4.6.b.v suturing incisions
 - 5.4.6.b.vi posing features
- 5.4.6.c Credit for individual cases will be allowed for only those students actively participating. No embalming case credit shall be given for those students observing the case. The number of observing students must be limited to ten (10) unless a video system or amphitheater is large enough to accommodate additional students without interfering with those students actively participating.
- 5.4.6.d Embalming case reports validating student participation are required, must be uniform in nature, and signed by the student and the instructor or preceptor. Each case report must document:
- 5.4.6.d.i details of embalming treatments and
 - 5.4.6.d.ii a detailed list of the student's participation in the case
- 5.4.6.e The program must provide substantive evidence of the technical competence of each graduating student. Such certification must be performed by a faculty member.
- 5.4.6.f Embalming case reports must be retained for at least seven years.
- 5.4.6.g Embalming cases may be completed in an on-campus setting or at an off-campus instructional site.
- 5.4.6.h Off-campus embalming instructional sites where students receive college credit are to be physically visited by a representative of the program and approved prior to the start of instruction. *See Standard 7.2*
- 5.4.7 Each student must participate in an on-campus laboratory setting in which the application of restorative art principles is practiced.
- 5.4.8 Participation in Funeral Directing is a requirement of the curriculum. Each student must actively participate in the funeral tasks included in this standard.
- 5.4.8.a Active participation means hands-on learning and must include the tasks enumerated in 5.4.8.b - 5.4.8.g.
- 5.4.8.b Students must utilize the following forms:
- 5.4.8.b.i First call form
 - 5.4.8.b.ii Arrangement worksheet
 - 5.4.8.b.iii FTC-compliant General Price List
 - 5.4.8.b.iv FTC-compliant Casket Price List
 - 5.4.8.b.v FTC-compliant Outer Burial Container Price List
 - 5.4.8.b.vi Embalming Authorization form
 - 5.4.8.b.vii Cremation Authorization form
- 5.4.8.c First call - Students must demonstrate the process of receiving five (5) first calls. This can be done in a simulation setting.
- 5.4.8.d Transfer of remains - Students must demonstrate the process of performing a body removal. This can be done in a simulation setting.

- 5.4.8.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 at one time (during 1 simulation).
- 5.4.8.f As part of the Arrangement Conference requirement in 5.4.8.e, students must prepare the following at least one time:
 - 5.4.8.f.i Death Certificate
 - 5.4.8.f.ii Burial Transit permit
 - 5.4.8.f.iii Social Security form (Statement of Death by Funeral Director)
 - 5.4.8.f.iv Death notice
 - 5.4.8.f.v Obituary
 - 5.4.8.f.vi FTC-compliant Statement of Funeral Good and Services Selected
 - 5.4.8.f.vii Veterans flag application, burial benefits forms, and headstone/marker forms
 - 5.4.8.f.viii Final disposition permit
- 5.4.8.g Funeral Observation - Students must observe five funeral related practices. 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. Educators are to assure that students will attend a variety of services with no duplication.
- 5.4.8.h 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.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate:

- How curricula for the institution's and Funeral Service Program's distance education offerings are comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

STANDARD 6: FACULTY

- 6.1 Members of the teaching faculty must be qualified in accordance with certain degree and professional requirements:
 - 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 documented by official transcripts.
 - 6.1.2 All newly and re-appointed full-time faculty must earn a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university within five years of their initial appointment date. Faculty who fail to meet the five-year requirement are not allowed to teach in any ABFSE accredited program until the degree is awarded. For faculty earning degrees in colleges or universities outside the United States, the institution awarding the degree must have met degree standards which in the judgment of AACRAO are acceptable or similar to those of ABFSE.
 - 6.1.3 The only exception to the above is in the category of laboratory assistant, guest lecturer, clinical instructor, preceptor, or comparable positions. Individuals in such categories must serve under the supervision of a qualified faculty member, as above.
 - 6.1.4 Faculty members who teach embalming, funeral directing, or restorative art courses must be graduates of an ABFSE-accredited program. If the faculty member graduated from a funeral service program outside the United States, the program must have academic requirements and standards equivalent to an ABFSE-accredited program. The following additional requirements must also be met:
 - 6.1.4.a a faculty member teaching embalming must be licensed to practice where required by law and have sufficient training and at least one year of experience as an embalmer. A faculty

- member teaching clinical embalming must meet the above requirements and be licensed to practice embalming in the state in which he/she is teaching.
 - 6.1.4.b a faculty member teaching funeral directing, merchandising or funeral service management must be licensed to practice funeral directing and have sufficient training and experience in funeral service practice to enable proper instruction;
 - 6.1.4.c a faculty member teaching restorative art must be licensed to practice embalming and have sufficient experience to enable proper instruction.
 - 6.1.4.d a faculty member teaching other required or elective courses must have sufficient specialized education or experience in these subjects to enable proper instruction.
- 6.2 All personnel serving as off-campus preceptors must be licensed to practice funeral directing, embalming or both. Embalming preceptors must be graduates of ABFSE accredited programs. If the preceptor graduated from a funeral service program outside the United States, the program must have academic requirements and standards equivalent to an ABFSE accredited program.
 - 6.2.1 Preceptor credentials must be verified by the program in one of the following ways:
 - 6.2.1.a Have on file an official transcript from the accredited funeral service program from which the preceptor graduated plus a copy of his or her state license;
 - 6.2.1.b Have on file a copy of the preceptor's license from the state licensing authority (if the state requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program)
 - 6.2.1.c Have on file a copy of (or be able to provide access to) verification from the State web site that the preceptor is licensed in the state (if the state requires graduation from an ABFSE accredited program) with the name of the preceptor and date of the issuance of the license maintained by the program.
 - 6.2.2 If preceptors are used, there must be an identified certification process in place and formal documentation that each preceptor has been properly oriented about the school's requirements concerning knowledge base, competency, and evaluation of student procedures and criteria.
- 6.3 All faculty and staff must adhere to ethical practices in student-related matters.
- 6.4 Faculty development opportunities must be available.
- 6.5 Faculty must be involved in the conduct of the academic program including maintaining standards pertaining to instruction and research.
- 6.6 The program must provide instructional support for faculty, in the form of library access, office facilities, and involvement in program planning.
- 6.7 Student-teacher ratios must be available for review and must not exceed 30:1 overall (full-time equivalent per federal/state guidelines/definitions) in the funeral service program, and no more than 25:1 headcount for laboratory sessions, no more than a 5:1 headcount may be maintained for each clinical embalming case and no instructor may supervise more than 3 embalming cases at any one time.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate that distance education faculty are appropriately qualified and effectively supported to deliver courses and evaluate students' success in distance education courses.

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 funeral home 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 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 preceptor and what is provided by the program.
 - 7.2.4.c A stated process for interrupting the clinical experience.
 - 7.2.4.d A stated process for dismissal of a student from clinical experience.
 - 7.2.4.e Personnel at the instructional site may be given adjunct faculty appointments by the institution.

STANDARD 8: LIBRARY / LEARNING RESOURCES

- 8.1 Learning resources, including computer resources, collections of books, periodicals, and reference materials must be both sufficient in scope and readily accessible to students to provide adequate support to the Funeral Service Education curriculum as described in institutional and program publications.

- 8.2 Computer resources include computer assisted instruction materials as well as access to internet resources. The learning resources program should provide access to external computer databases.
- 8.3 To the extent quality and availability affect program outcomes, learning resources must be accessible to students outside of regular classroom hours. The program must require student utilization of these resources as described in institutional and program publications.
 - 8.3.1 A written acquisition policy relevant to funeral service education must be in place and the program director and faculty must be involved with the annual acquisitions related to this program.
 - 8.3.2 Sufficient space must be devoted to learning resources to provide for the needs of students in funeral service and must be accessible during reasonable hours and administered by qualified staff.
 - 8.3.3 Learning resources must be catalogued according to a recognized standard method.
- 8.4 There must be in place an orientation for students regarding use of the learning resources available on campus including use of the Internet, how to access course materials and how to get help.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate how the institution provides effective learning resources to support students enrolled in distance education offerings.

STANDARD 9: STUDENTS

- 9.1 Ethical Practices:
 - 9.1.1 A program must adopt and enforce ethical practices recognized in higher education in all student-related matters. These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - 9.1.1.a presentation of clear and accurate information about the program;
 - 9.1.1.b student rights, responsibilities and processes;
 - 9.1.1.c program requirements;
 - 9.1.1.d a statement regarding program adherence to ethical practices in student-related matters must be published in program informational materials;
 - 9.1.2 All student policies and regulations must be equally applied to all students.
- 9.2 Admissions:
 - 9.2.1 Admissions requirements must be publicly stated in institutional publications including the catalog and must be administered as published.
 - 9.2.2 The minimum educational requirement for admission to a program is:
 - 9.2.2.a graduation from an accredited four-year high school or its recognized equivalent, or
 - 9.2.2.b a minimum of nine (9) semester hours (or the equivalent) of post-secondary coursework exclusive of developmental courses from a regionally accredited institution and a minimum 2.0 grade point average.
 - 9.2.3 A student shall not be enrolled in a program until evidence is supplied that Standard 9.2 has been satisfied. Such evidence must be:
 - 9.2.3.a Transcript of high school or college work, received directly from the institution from which the credits were received. If a program accepts electronic transcripts, a system must be in place to verify that such transmissions are secure and an accurate representation of student credits and grades, or

- 9.2.3.b Evidence that the applicant has a recognized credential equivalent to the high school diploma. A credential must be certified by an authorized official of a recognized high school, the state department of education or its equivalent, or
 - 9.2.3.c Evidence that the applicant has fulfilled the requirements of state law for recognition of high school completion or its equivalent in the jurisdiction where the student resided at the time of completion.
 - 9.2.3.d In the case of applicants from outside the United States, a statement from a recognized education authority certifying that the applicant has completed formal educational requirements at least equivalent to high school graduation in the United States.
 - 9.2.3.e In the case of applicants from outside the United States, a statement from a recognized education authority certifying that the applicant has completed formal educational requirements at least equivalent to high school graduation in the United States.
- 9.2.4 Transfer credit policies must be published and available to students and the public. These policies must include the criteria for the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.
- 9.2.5 If credit for prior learning is offered:
- 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. A substantive change application must be submitted and approved by COA before the program initially offers 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 A program must have health services information available to 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.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate how the institution provides effective academic and student support services to students enrolled in distance education offerings, and how the institution assures the integrity of its distance education offerings.

Institutions with 50% or more of their program requirements delivered through distance education must:

- demonstrate how recruitment and admission practices related to distance education are appropriate to the institution's and the Funeral Service Program's mission and purposes;

STANDARD 10: PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT

10.1 Each 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 plan which incorporates guidelines, procedures, and methodologies of planning and assessment. The plan must:

10.1.1.a assess the program's learning outcomes.

10.1.1.b be in writing and approved by the appropriate administrative authority.

10.1.1.c contain provisions for periodic review and revision.

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; and

10.1.2.g Documentation of how the assessment efforts are used to improve instructional and program quality.

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 rates: New Enrollees will be reported as a cohort when they enter the accredited program and tracked to graduation.

When students complete 50% or more of the degree program they will be tracked to graduation for calculation of the timely graduation rate. From this point, completion in 150% of program length will be considered timely graduation.

- 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.
- 10.3.4 Graduation, employment and NBE pass rates must be separately calculated for students who take 50% or more of their courses through Distance Education. The rates for traditional and distance education students will be considered both combined and separately in accreditation actions.
- 10.4 Programs must maintain at least a 60% three (3) year average pass rate for first-time takers of the Arts and Sciences sections of the NBE.
- 10.4.1 A program with a single year NBE pass rate below 60% on either or both sections of the NBE receives a warning, 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 pass rate and detail plans for improvement.
Failure to submit a satisfactory report may lead to negative accreditation action.
An institution with sporadic rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable reporting action as identified above.
- 10.4.2 Three-year average NBE pass rates below 60% will result in the following action:
10.4.2.a first year: Probation.
10.4.2.b second consecutive year: Accreditation is withdrawn unless good cause is shown to continue accreditation. (Show Cause)
- 10.5 Programs must maintain at least a 60% 3-year average graduation rate.
- 10.5.1 A program with a single year graduation rate below 60% receives a warning, 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 graduation rate and detail plans for improvement.

An institution with sporadic graduation rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable reporting action as identified above.
- 10.5.2 Three-year average graduation rates below 60% will result in the following action:
10.5.2.a first year: Probation.
10.5.2.b second consecutive year: Accreditation is withdrawn unless good cause is shown to continue accreditation. (Show Cause)
- 10.6 Programs must maintain at least a 60% 3-year average employment rate.
- 10.6.1 A program with a single year employment rate below 60% receives a warning, 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.

An institution with sporadic employment rates will be reviewed and may be subject to comparable reporting action as identified above.
- 10.6.2 Three-year average employment rates below 60% will result in the following action:
10.6.2.a first year: Probation.
10.6.2.b second consecutive year: Accreditation is withdrawn unless good cause is shown to continue accreditation. (Show Cause)

- 10.7 Substandard rates for two or more outcome metrics in the same year (graduation, employment and NBE pass rates) will result in the following action:
- 10.7.1 first year: Probation
 - 10.7.2 second consecutive year: Accreditation is withdrawn unless good cause is shown to continue accreditation (Show Cause).
- 10.8 The pass rate of first-time takers on the National Board Examination (NBE), and program employment rates and graduation rates for the most recent three (3) year periods will be posted in the Directory of Accredited Programs on the ABFSE website.
- 10.8.1 So that the public and prospective students can easily access these statistics, programs must maintain up to date rate information provided by the ABFSE on the program website.
 - 10.8.2 The following statement must also appear in the institution's catalog: “National Board Examination pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at www.abfse.org in the Directory of Accredited Programs.
 - 10.8.3 Accredited programs in which students take 50% or more of their courses via distance education must also post NBE pass rates, graduation rates and employment rates for this modality – effective for 2020 calendar year data.
 - 10.8.4 Institutions failing to comply with Standard 10.8 will be placed on probation immediately. Continued non-compliance may lead to the removal of accreditation.

GUIDANCE for DISTANCE EDUCATION (see Appendix E for details)

Institutions with one or more program courses available through distance education must demonstrate how the institution’s and the Funeral Service Program’s plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding distance education offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes and its system of governance and academic oversight;

Institutions with 50% or more of their program offered via distance must demonstrate how the institution and the Funeral Service Program evaluates the effectiveness of its distance education offerings, including the extent to which the distance education goals are achieved, and how the results of its evaluations are used to enhance the attainment of the goals.

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

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions, for which ABFSE serves as ‘gatekeeper’ in order to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must respond.)

- 11.1 Single purpose institutions for which the ABFSE serves as “gatekeeper” must also demonstrate compliance with all obligations under Title IV, including results of compliance audits and program reviews. (See Appendix F)
- 11.2 Recognizing the primary role of financial aid auditors to ensure compliance with Title IV, COA will limit their review under this standard to the following:
 - 11.2.1 Examination of the most recent three years of financial aid, including any audit exceptions.

- 11.2.2 Default Rates for the Title IV Student Loan Program for the years since the last accreditation review, as reported to the college by the US Department of Education.
11.2.2.a For institutions in which most recent rates are above the federal guidelines, plans to bring rates into compliance must be reported to the ABFSE office.
- 11.2.3 The most recent financial aid audit and default rate info (as indicated in 11.2.1 and 11.2.2) will be attached to the Annual Report each year to be reviewed by a sub-committee of the COA.
- 11.3 Any adverse communications relative to Title IV eligibility must be reported to the ABFSE office in a timely manner (within 30 days of receipt).
- 11.3.1 Non-compliance with Title IV obligations will be considered in ABFSE accreditation decisions.

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

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions, for which ABFSE serves as ‘gatekeeper’ in order to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must respond.)

- 12.1 The Institution must demonstrate that the subject matter taught relates reasonably to tuition and fees charged and to length of the program. Documentation must include length of program(s) and the number of hours and the corresponding tuition and fees for each program.

STANDARD 13: PROGRAM LENGTH IN CREDIT HOURS

(Only single-purpose, non-regionally accredited, funeral service institutions, for which ABFSE serves as ‘gatekeeper’ in order to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs, must respond.)

- 13.1 The Institution must demonstrate that its program is defined in standard credit hour terms, either semester hour or quarter hour following the current Department of Education definition of credit hours.
- 13.1.1 The Federal Definition of Credit Hour is found in 34 CFR 600.2 and 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l); see also DCL ID: GEN-11-06: Credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:
- One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
 - At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
- 13.1.2 Institution must provide evidence of how credit hours are measured/calculated and how the program’s hours are distributed by term. This should be done for on campus as well as distance education programs.