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American Accreditation at Home and Abroad

Hellenic American University Conference on Demonstrating Quality in Higher Education

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The New England Association accredits

- 218 institutions in the 6 New England states *plus*
- 4 institutions abroad
- High proportion of:
 - Oldest
 - Independent
 - Most storied
 - Wealthiest
 - Highest ranked institutions
- Diverse set of institutions

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Variety in Institutional Mission

A Sample of *Public* and Independent Institutions

Harvard University
Urban College
Hartford Seminary
York County Community College
Massachusetts College of Art
Boston Architectural Center
Naval War College
Maine Maritime Academy
Johnson & Wales University
Simon's Rock College of Bard
Rhode Island School of Design
Conway School of Landscape Design

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
Berklee College of Music
University of New Hampshire
Community College of Vermont
Franklin Pierce Law Center
School for International Training
Hult International Business School
Smith College
American University in Bulgaria
Northeastern University
Goodwin College

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Regional Accreditation & Independent Institutions (preliminary CHEA data)

Region	Independent	Public	Total	% Ind.
Middle States	319	204	523	61%
New England	139	77	216	64%
North Central	495	509	1004	49%
Northwest	47	106	153	31%
Southern	324	461	785	41%
Western	125	145	170	46%

New England will be ~67% independent institutions

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U.S. Features that Help Define Accreditation

1. Historical: Private institutions first
2. Political: U.S. federal system and the Constitution
3. Strong tradition of voluntary associations
4. Not really a system
 - Decentralized
 - Large
 - Diverse
 - Serves a mobile society
 - Porous - and forgiving

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Accreditation = Standards + Mission

Standards of
higher
education
community

+

Mission of
your
institution

evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence, evidence

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Accreditation is system of self-regulation

1. Setting the Standards
2. Agreeing to abide by Standards and policies
3. Peer review

Educational value of the process for those who participate.

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Accreditation fulfills 2 functions

1. Quality assurance:

Does the institution meet the Standards for Accreditation?

2. Quality improvement:

The accreditation process helps the institution become better

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Two minute history of American accreditation

1. 1885 New England Association of Schools and Colleges
2. Periodic review
3. Standards
4. Self-study and visit
5. Link to federal government

What are these "regions"?

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Increasing complexity

Institutions

Branch campuses, distance learning, higher degree,
distance learning

Society

Technology, learning disabilities, intellectual
property, substances, international students

Maturing of accreditation

Relations with the federal government, centripetal
and centrifugal forces for regional accreditation

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Distinctive features of American accreditation

1. Non-governmental
2. Candor
3. Volunteers give their time

American universities have a lot of autonomy

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Accreditation has 3 steps

1. **Institutional self-study** - against the Standards for Accreditation
2. **Team visits** - 3 days - to validate the self study and be "eyes and ears" of the Commission
3. **Commission** makes a decision

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Standards in 11 areas

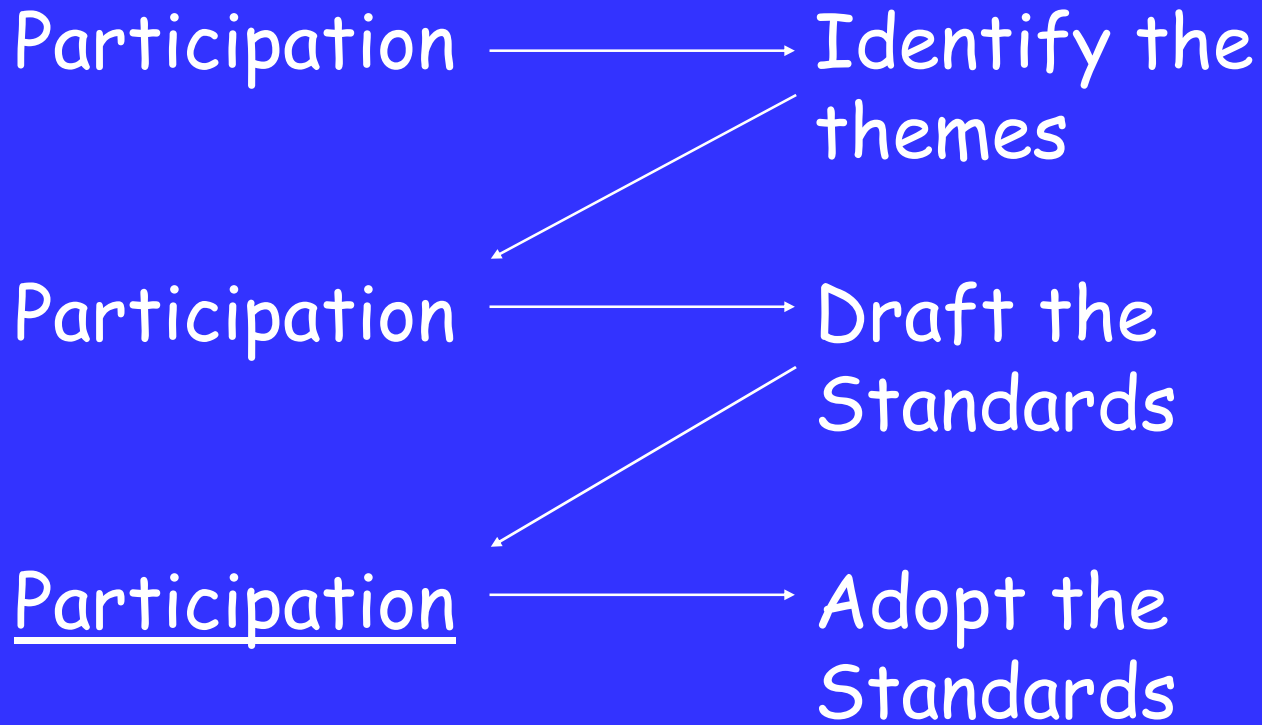
1. Mission
2. Planning and Evaluation
3. Organization and Governance
4. The Academic Program
5. Faculty
6. Students
7. Information Resources and Technology
8. Physical and Technological Resources
9. Financial Resources
10. Public Disclosure
11. Integrity

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The Standards Revision Process

Members

Commission



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Changes are throughout the Standards

Standard	Info & Techn.	Assess- ment	Public Disclos- ure	Quality Academic Program	Responsibility & Integrity
1..		x			x
2..		xx		x	
3..			x		xx
4..	x	xx		xx	xx
5..		x		x	x
6..		x			x
7..	xx				
8..	x			x	
9..					xx
10..		x	xx		
11..					xx



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What's New in the Draft Standards?

1. Are we clear with the public about what's on offer?
2. Is the board effective in its fiduciary responsibility?
3. Are mission and capacity central to decision making?
4. Are planning and evaluation integrated – and useful?
5. Are we using information and technology effectively?
6. Are we assuring the integrity of our credits and degrees?
7. Do we understand what and how students are learning?
8. Do we have an atmosphere where integrity can be pursued?

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Current Issues for Regional Accreditation

Legal Environment

- Public disclosure
- Due process
- Transfer of credit

Changes in Institutions

- Out of sight, out of. . . .
- For-profit institutions

Changes in Expectations for Higher Ed

- Retention, graduation
- What does he know and. . . .

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American Higher Education Abroad

1. AAICU institutions: Two here in Greece*

Armenia, Bulgaria, Egypt,
England, France, Greece,
Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Spain,
Switzerland, United Arab
Emirates

"the American University of"

*Deree: The American College of Greece, and American College of Thessaloniki

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American Higher Education Abroad, *continued*

2. Others with "American" in the name and potentially members of AAICU
3. Others that are regionally accredited
4. Others without "American" in the name - that may be American-style
5. Others with "American" in the name - that aren't.

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NEASC and Free-Standing Institutions Abroad

Requirements of Affiliation

3. Offers academic programs that are comparable in terms of length, curriculum, objectives, learning outcomes, and degrees awarded to those offered by regionally accredited institutions the United States.
7. Offers its instructional programs entirely or predominantly through coursework that includes face-to-face instruction.

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NEASC and Free-Standing Institutions Abroad

Requirements of Affiliation, continued

8. Uses English as a principal language of instruction and operation, sufficient to permit an evaluation by the Commission and to ensure the ability of its graduates to continue their education in other regionally accredited U.S. institutions.
9. . . . requires a coherent and substantive program of general education at the postsecondary level, comparable to those offered by institutions in the United States, as either a prerequisite to or a clearly defined element in those programs. . . .

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NEASC and Free-Standing Institutions Abroad

Requirements of Affiliation, continued

13. . . . If the institution is not legally eligible for local government approval, it otherwise documents its standing and significant support from the local community and other relevant communities of interest.
16. Has an administration, faculty, and professional staff who collectively have significant experience in American higher education and are prepared to ensure the institution meets the Standards for Accreditation.
17. . . . Provides financial records reconciled to accounting practices common to American higher education.

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And in the Standards. . . .

4.7 Students completing an undergraduate or graduate degree program demonstrate collegiate-level skills in the English language.

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And, of course, meeting the Standards

- Governance, including the board
- Planning and evaluation
- Faculty role in the curriculum
- Assessment of student learning
- Libraries and learning resources
- Student services
- Public disclosure

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Questions and Discussion. . . .



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