# **05-071 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Chapter 170: STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING REQUESTS FOR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORIZATIONS AND FOR OUT-OF-STATE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS SEEKING TO OFFER ACADEMIC CREDIT COURSES/PROGRAMS IN MAINE**

Summary: Rule 05-071 CMR 170 establishes standards to be utilized by review committees when evaluating requests for degree authorization and for requests from out-of-state postsecondary institutions seeking to offer academic credit courses/programs in Maine.

**1. DEGREE AUTHORIZATION - MAINE BASED INSTITUTIONS**

A. Organization and Governance

1. The institution has a current written document detailing administrative responsibilities of the governing board, administrators, the faculty, the staff, and the students (if staff and students participate in institutional governance).

2. The institution has an organizational chart that clearly shows lines of authority and the relationship among component units and personnel.

B. Institutional Objectives

1. The institution has defined its educational mission and general purposes or goals, and has included within its ~~“~~statement of purpose~~”~~ such uniqueness of programming and educational philosophy as may be inherent in the proposed degree offerings.

2. The institution's ~~“~~statement of purpose~~”~~ is readily identifiable through its course and program offerings.

C. Degree Requirements

1. The institution awards degrees, only upon successful completion of the courses or programs of study, and degree requirements to be met are specified in writing.

2. The institution's semester hour[[1]](#footnote-1)\* requirements for degree completion meet the following minimums:

Associate Degree - An Associate degree requires a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. The Associate of Arts degree shall include a minimum of 36 semester hours or 54 quarter hours in general education courses.[[2]](#footnote-2)\*\* The Associate of Science degree~~s~~ shall include a minimum of 15 semester hours or 23 quarter hours in general education courses.

Baccalaureate Degree - A Baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 semester hours or 180\*\*\* quarter hours

Master's Degree - A Master's degree shall require a minimum of 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate.

Doctoral Degree - A Doctoral degree shall require a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate in addition to the dissertation.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis for institutions using a non-traditional approach instead of semester hours or quarter hours to determine degree completion

D. Admission Requirements

1. The institution has a written policy defining the minimum requirements for admission and for acceptance at the specific degree level or into the specific degree program proposed by the institution, consistent with criteria established by the appropriate regional or nationally recognized specialized accrediting agency.

2. The admission policies include detailed attention to the standards for academic credit given for experience, and the criteria for transfer credit.

3. The institution has a written policy detailing the criteria and procedure to be followed in providing for a refund of tuition and fees.

E. Academic Programs

1. The educational program and curriculum reflects the philosophy, purposes, and objectives of the institution.

2. The institution has a written policy describing its system for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, the criteria for academic probation and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.

3. Procedures for the evaluation of the quality of programs of instruction and specific courses are clearly stated in writing.

4. The institution's programs of study consist of planned educational experiences to meet the stated objectives and include attention to the necessary prerequisites, required courses, and appropriate progression.

F. Faculty

1. The preponderance of faculty members provide instruction and possess academic, scholarly, and teaching qualifications appropriate to their respective positions and teaching assignments and are distributed in such a way that all students benefit from these qualifications.

2. The faculty is involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum for all degree programs to assure quality learning experiences are provided for all students.

3. The faculty participates in the governance of the institution and the academic programs as well as in short-term institutional planning activities.

G. Student Services

1. Students are provided with, and have access to, a system of educational, career and personal advising services.

H. Library and Learning Resources

1. The institution maintains and provides ready access to library and learning resources, virtual and/or physical, that are adequate and appropriate for student achievement of stated program goals and objectives.

I. Facilities

1. The institution provides and maintains an appropriate learning environment with the necessary supports and technologies sufficient for student achievement of educational objectives. In doing so, industry standards for health, safety, and maintenance are followed.

J. Financial Resources

1. The application for establishment of a new degree-granting program documents a complete and realistic plan for implementing and financing the proposed academic program during the first five-year cycle of operation. The plan is based on reasonably projected enrollment levels; the nature and extent of instructional services required; the availability of existing resources to support the program; additional resource requirements; and projected/committed sources of funding.

2. The application from an existing degree-granting institution clearly documents that it has the financial resources necessary to support its purposes, implement its program and maintain its continuity for a minimum of five years by providing its most recent audited financial statement, and that evidence exists of long range financial planning.

**2. OFFERING IN MAINE BY OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTION**

Introduction: Operating Authorization and Accreditation

1. The institution has legal authorization to operate and grant degrees in its home state, either through a state charter or other statutory provision, and has been in operation in its home state for at least 3 years° prior to the date of application for approval to make offerings in Maine.

°**Note:** The three year rule will be applied on a case-by-case basis and may not be required if in the best interest of the State of Maine and its citizens.

2. The institution is accredited by a regional accrediting agency or the program to be offered in Maine is nationally accredited by one of the programmatic accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. In the absence of such accreditation, an application to operate in the State of Maine will not be considered.

A. Organization and Governance

1. The institution has a current written document detailing the administrative responsibilities of the governing board, administrators, the faculty, the staff, and the students (if staff and students participate in institutional governance.

2. Organizational charts clearly showing the lines of authority and the relationships among component units and personnel have been developed with attention given to both on-campus and off-campus operations.

B. Institutional Objectives

1. The institution has defined its overall educational mission and general purposes or goals, and has included within its statement of purpose such uniqueness or programming and educational philosophy as may be inherent in the proposed degree courses or programs to be offered in Maine.

2. The institution's statement of purpose is readily identifiable through its course and program offerings.

C. Degree Requirements

1. The institution awards degrees, only upon successful completion of the courses or programs of study, and degree requirements to be met are specified in writing.

2. All degree requirements are clearly stated in writing and include attention to residence requirements if such are necessary for completion of the program.

3. The institution’s semester hour\* requirements for degree completion meet the following minimums:

Associate Degree - An Associate degree requires a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. The Associate of Arts degree shall include a minimum of 36 semester hours or 54 quarter hours in general education courses.[[3]](#footnote-3)\*\* The Associate of Science degree shall include a minimum of 15 semester hours or 23 quarter hours in general education courses.

Baccalaureate Degree - A Baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 semester hours or 180\*\*\* quarter hours

Master's Degree - A Master's degree shall require a minimum of 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate.

Doctoral Degree - A Doctoral degree shall require a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours beyond the Baccalaureate in addition to the dissertation.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis for institutions using a non-traditional approach instead of semester hours or quarter hours to determine degree completion.

D. Admission Requirements

1. The institution has written policies defining the minimum requirements for admission into the academic credit courses or program proposed for offering in Maine.

2. The admission policies include detailed the standards for academic credit given for experience, and the criteria for determining transfer credit.

3. A written refund policy is in evidence detailing the criteria for the refund of tuition and fees.

E. Academic Programs

1. The educational program and curricular to be offered in Maine is reflective of the philosophy, purposes, and objectives of the institution.

2. The institution has a written policy describing its system for evaluating student performance, the minimum performance considered satisfactory, the criteria for academic probation and conditions for dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.

3. Procedures for evaluation of programs of instruction and specific courses are clearly stated in writing.

4. The institution's programs of study consist of planned educational experiences to meet the stated objectives and includes attention to required prerequisites, required courses, and appropriate progression.

5. The materials and equipment necessary for attainment of the objectives of the course or program offerings are available at the Maine site.

6. Off-campus programs are equivalent to those conducted at the home campus.

F. Faculty

1. The preponderance of faculty members provide instruction and possess academic, scholarly, and teaching qualifications appropriate to their respective positions and teaching assignments and are distributed in such a way that all Maine students benefit from these qualifications.

2. The institution’s system for evaluation of faculty is utilized with the evaluation of all faculty providing instruction at the Maine site.

G. Student Services

1. Students are provided with, and have access to, a system of educational, career and personal advising services

H. Library and Learning Resources

1. The institution maintains and provides ready access to library and learning resources, virtual and/or physical, that are adequate and appropriate for student achievement of stated program goals and objectives.

I. Facilities

1. The institution provides and maintains an appropriate learning environment with the necessary supports and technologies sufficient for student achievement of educational objectives. In doing so, industry standards for health, safety, and maintenance are followed.

J. Financial Resources

The application from an existing degree-granting institution clearly documents that it has the financial resources necessary to support its purposes, implement its Maine program and maintain its continuity for a period of time by providing its most recent audited financial statement, and that evidence exists of long range financial planning and viability.

K. Telecommunication Instruction

1. All standards indicated in Section 2 subsections A-K of this chapter apply to requests for approval to offer in Maine academic credit courses or programs via telecommunication instruction when there is a physical presence here as defined in Chapter 149 CMR, Section 1.I and Section 2, E, (1).

2. The quality of off-campus instruction, including faculty selection and course approval, is the responsibility of the same academic unit that administers the insitution’s program on-campus.

3. All curricula is derived directly from approved programs and each course is consistent in quality, content and standards with resident courses offered on the home campus.

1. GENERAL/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Maine-based institutions and out-of-state institutions, with State Board authorization to operate in Maine, shall provide evidence that they comply with appropriate, federal and state laws which prohibit discrimination against persons because of race, gender, religion or creed, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, economic status, or disability.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 20-A MRSA § 10710

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 1986 – filing 86-363

AMENDED:

July 25, 1994 – filing 94-310

EFFECTIVE DATE (ELECTRONIC CONVERSION):

May 19, 1996

AMENDED:

November 23, 2008 – filing 2008-543

APAO WORD VERSION CONVERSION (IF NEEDED) AND ACCESSIBILITY CHECK: July 15, 2025

APPENDIX A

General education courses are those designed to place emphasis on cognitive development rather than on a vocational objective and may include the following when such are not specifically designed for inclusion in a non-academic program:

English music

history sociology

philosophy world languages

literature humanities

religion mathematics

art chemistry

biology psychology

economics physics

1. \* With institutions using the semester system there are two 15-week semesters in an academic year. A semester hour is

   defined as the credit received for completing 15 contact hours of study in class and 30 clock hours in outside preparation.

   One semester hour is the equivalent of 1.5 quarter hours. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \*\* See Appendix A for list of general education courses.

   \*\*\* With institutions using the quarter system there are three 10-week quarters in an academic year. A quarter hour is 2/3 of a semester hour (one quarter hour is the equivalent of .667 semester hours [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)