A closer look at the revised standards

The Accrediting Council unanimously approved revisions to the accreditation standards Aug. 24, including an adjustment to the 80/65 credit requirement in Standard 2: Curriculum.

The revisions were based on comments gathered over a two-year period by the Standards Review Committee from administrators, industry professionals and educators.

Doug Anderson, chair of the committee, said most comments were on the need to adjust the liberal arts credit hour requirement and to provide language to clarify and help bring consistency in judging diversity and assessment standards.

The ACEJMC office has received numerous questions about the revisions. The following highlights some of the more notable changes and addresses the more commonly asked questions.

- The revised standards go into effect in fall of the 2013 academic year.

To view the revised standards, click here.

- **Adjustment of 80/65** credit hour requirement to: “72 semester credit hours (or 104 quarter credit hours) required for a baccalaureate degree outside of the unit and meet the liberal arts and sciences-general education requirements of the institution.” The revision reduces the 80 credit hours required outside of the unit to 72. The adjustment from 80 to 72 provides 8 additional credit hours within the major.
  
  The unit must ensure its students meet the liberal arts requirement of its parent university.

  Several questions have been about classes taken outside the unit but allowed as credit in the major and whether these classes should be counted in the 72. In general, count these classes as they have been in the past. Because each accredited unit is unique, there is no one all-inclusive answer.

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Calendar reminders

**Membership dues:**
Oct. 1 was the deadline for all accredited program and member association dues. Contact Cheryl Klug at cklug@ku.edu with your questions.

**Committee meeting:**
March 16, 2013, Chicago; hotel and meeting information will be sent in January.

**Council meeting:**
May 3, 2013, Phoenix; hotel and meeting information will be sent in February.

Assessment guide among new resources

The Accrediting Council has made available on its website three new resources to assist programs with the accreditation process.

- **ACEJMC Guide to Assessment** explains ACEJMC’s expectations of an assessment plan and offers suggestions for assessing student learning.

- **Preparation for Accreditation** suggests actions a program should undertake in the years before the self-study, including the collection of data and record keeping and the involvement of faculty and students in the accreditation process.

- **Mission and Plans** presents information on writing a mission statement and developing a diversity plan, long-range strategic plan and an assessment plan.

Examples of strong self-studies, and diversity and assessment plans also are available.

For more information, contact the ACEJMC office at 785-864-3973.
Accreditation workshop, fall meeting have large turnout

Susanne Shaw, ACEJMC executive director, expected 25 to 30 to register for a one-day accreditation workshop Aug. 23 in Chicago. Instead, there were 65 participants, (photo at right) representing schools working toward initial accreditation and schools preparing for their next review. At least 50 of the participants attended the fall Council meeting the next day to observe (photo bottom right) Council discussion of the standards revisions. Jan Dates, Ann Brill, Doug Boyd and Barbara Cochran (photo far right) were among Council members in attendance.

Standards revisions

Continued from page 1

However, as an example: A photography class taken in the art department that is more conceptual or theory-based would likely count toward a university’s liberal arts requirement. A photography class that is skills and application centric would be professional in nature and, therefore, count toward the major and not in the 72.

• Schools working on self-studies in 2012/13 would use the 80/65 rule for 2011/12 and the 72 rule for 2012/13.

• Acceptable internship credit hours will be extended to six semester hours.

• Online classes and accredited online degree programs will be reviewed and held to the same standards as those onsite.

• Diversity plans should be unit-specific and include the unit’s definition of diversity and identify the under-represented groups.

• Standard 6 Student Services has long required accredited units to collect and analyze student enrollment, retention, graduation, and job placement. Beginning fall 2013, this information must be made available on the unit’s website and updated annually. The data should be specific to the accredited unit and not university-wide numbers.

Contact Susanne Shaw at 785-864-3986 or email sshaw@ku.edu with your questions.

Council revises bylaws

The Accrediting Council revised its membership bylaws, setting all dues for professional and educator organizations at $3,000 per seat and requiring all Council representatives from educator organizations to be affiliated with accredited programs.

Peter Bhatia, Council president, said the new educator membership requirement would be grandfathered; one remaining Council member from an unaccredited program would complete her term in spring 2014.

The $3,000 per seat dues structure for all professional and educator member organizations corrects an outdated dues structure where professional organizations’ dues were based on their budgets.

The two revisions were approved by a majority vote at the Council’s September 2011 meeting. The vote to formally codify the language into the bylaws was approved 23-2 at the Aug. 24, 2012, meeting in Chicago.
Accreditation timeline

**NOVEMBER**
-- Before Nov. 1, submit CEO’s letter of invitation to ACEJMC executive director.
-- Before Nov. 1, return Enrollment and Credit Hour Information and preferred visit dates to ACEJMC office.

**DECEMBER**
-- Receive from ACEJMC the date of your 2012-2013 site visit and due date for self-study.
-- Schedule exit interview with CEO and team in the morning on the last day of visit.

**CHEA recognition review Nov. 19**

ACEJMC is undergoing its 10-year evaluation process by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CHEA provides oversight of higher education accreditation.

ACEJMC completed a self-assessment in March and was observed by a CHEA representative during Council deliberations at its April 27-28 meeting.

CHEA’s Committee on Recognition will consider ACEJMC recognition at its meeting Nov. 19 in Washignton, D.C.

PRSA appoints Mark Hass to Council

The Public Relations Society of America has appointed Mark Hass as a representative to the Accrediting Council. Hass, who has three decades of experience as a journalist, entrepreneur and communications professional, is president and CEO of Edelman U.S. He is responsible for the agency’s 15 offices and 2,200 employees in the United States.

Hass joined Edelman in January 2010 after his independent firm, MH Group Communications, was acquired and integrated into Edelman Digital. Before entering the public relations industry, Hass was a newspaper journalist, working as a reporter and editor at The Miami Herald and The Syracuse Post-Standard. He was an assistant managing editor at The Detroit News, where his staff won the Pulitzer Prize.

Gleason appointed to lead Appeals Board

Tim Gleason, dean of the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon, was appointed chair of the Appeals Board by Peter Bhatia, Council president.

Other board members are Perri Klass and Carol Sagers. Klass is director of New York University’s Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. Sagers, a marketing director with McDonald’s USA from 2004 to 2011, is now a marketing consultant.

**Member and program updates**

**Peggy Kuhr**, dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Montana, has been appointed interim vice president for Integrated Communications.

**Denise Dowling** will serve as interim dean of the school until Kuhr returns.

**David Coulson** is the new chair of the Department of Mass Communications at Jackson State University. Coulson was a professor and the founding graduate director in the School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno. Coulson replaces interim chair Dr. Olorundare Aworuwa.

**Diane F. Witmer** was named chair of the Department of Communications at California State University, Fullerton. Witmer was an associate professor in the department from 1997 to 2003 and has been full professor since 2003.

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