



RESOURCE MANUAL

for The Principles of Accreditation:
Foundations for Quality Enhancement



Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges

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SECTION 5: Administration and Organization

- 5.1** The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution. (*Chief executive officer*) [CR]

Rationale and Notes

The institution's CEO has ultimate responsibility for priorities and initiatives that advance its board-approved mission, goals, and priorities. In order to minimize conflicts of interest, the expectation is that the CEO's responsibilities are not shared among competing interests and the CEO does not hold any position other than that of institutional chief executive officer.

NOTE

An exception may be made if the CEO of the institution also serves as CEO of a system of institutions. However, then the institution must request the exception and abide by the conditions of the SACSCOC policy on [Standard 5.1: Documenting an Alternative Approach](#). Details will then be provided within this standard's narrative in the Compliance Certification.

Questions to Consider

- What is the position description for the CEO?
- What other key activities—either paid or unpaid—does the CEO have?
 - Do any of these activities create a potential for a conflict of interest with the interests of the institution?
 - Are these other activities “primary”?
- If the institution's CEO is also the CEO or an officer of the system of institutions:
 - How are conflicts of interest avoided?
 - In what sense is the position as institutional CEO the primary responsibility of this person?
 - How autonomous are the other institutions in the system?
 - What is the reporting and funding structure of the institutions in the system?

Sample Documentation

- Position description for the CEO.
- Brief biography of the CEO.
- By-laws, policy manuals, and other documents outlining the duties of the CEO.
- If the CEO of the institution is also CEO of the system, then additional evidence as required by SACSCOC policy on [Standard 5.1: Documenting an Alternative Approach](#).

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, if Applicable

SACSCOC Policy: [Standard 5.1: Documenting an Alternative Approach](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, if Applicable

Standard 4.1 (*Governing board characteristics*)[see part e])

Standard 4.2.c (*CEO evaluation/selection*)

5.2.a **The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the institution’s educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services. (*CEO control*)**

Rationale and Notes

The CEO oversees an organizational structure that includes key academic and administrative officers and decision makers with credentials appropriate to their respective responsibilities. Generally this oversight is done through a structural arrangement whereby key officers of the institution report directly to the CEO, or to a chief operating officer who in turn reports to the CEO. Regardless of the structure, the CEO is ultimately responsible for all operations of the institution.

Questions to Consider

- What is the organizational structure of the institution? How does the institution publish and disseminate its organizational structure?
- What is the specific reporting relationship of the CEO to institutional leadership for educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services? Do job descriptions support the CEO’s ultimate responsibility and control over these areas?
- Are reporting lines to the CEO clear to all affected constituencies?
- Is the organizational structure consistent with written policies governing roles and responsibilities of the board, administration, and faculty?

Sample Documentation

- Organizational charts showing reporting structures at the institution.
- Minutes from administrative leadership meetings showing the CEO’s role.
- Internal memos showing the CEO’s role.
- If authority is delegated, internal policies that clarify the authority for administrative and academic decisions.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 5.4 (*Qualified administrative/academic officers*)

- 5.2.b** **The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over the institution's intercollegiate athletics program.**
(*Control of intercollegiate athletics*)

Rationale and Notes

The institution's intercollegiate athletics program often influences the institution's visibility and stature, helps define its image, may provide external financial support, and often is a major operation with a significant financial impact on the institution. It is important that the institution's CEO has ultimate and active responsibility for appropriate administrative and financial control of the institution's intercollegiate athletics program, including the academic standards of athletes and the activities of booster groups that are not fully independent of the institution. Athletic booster groups often fall under the parameters of Standard 5.3 (*Institution-related entities*).

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution's CEO exercise administrative and financial control over intercollegiate athletics, including athletic policies and procedures, operating budgets, recruiting standards, and academic standards for athletes?
- What is the reporting structure between the CEO and the athletic director?

Sample Documentation

- Job descriptions clarifying the reporting structure for those directing intercollegiate athletics, athletics budgets, athletics fundraising, and athletics compliance.
- Organizational charts establishing reporting relationships.
- Memos, minutes, and/or written correspondence establishing the role of the CEO in exercising control over intercollegiate athletics.
- Relevant standards of the most recent compliance reports addressing athletics oversight, such as reports from internal audits, or external bodies such as the NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA, and NCCAA.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 5.3 (Institution-related entities)

- 5.2.c** The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over the institution's fund-raising activities.
(Control of fund-raising activities)

Rationale and Notes

The achievement of an institution's mission often depends on successful fund raising. Therefore, the institution's CEO has ultimate control of the institution's fund-raising activities because fund-raising activities need to support the institution's priorities and initiatives as identified by the governing board and the CEO. It is the responsibility of the CEO to monitor these priorities.

NOTE

This standard refers to internal institutional fund raising and not independent, separately incorporated entities. (These entities fall under Standard 5.3 [Institution-related entities].)

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution's CEO exercise administrative and financial control over institutional fund raising, including policies and procedures and operating budgets?
- What is the reporting structure between the CEO and offices involved in fund-raising activities?
- Do fund-raising activities support the mission of the institution?
- What is the role of the governing board in fund-raising activities?
- If not operated as independent, separately incorporated entities, what role does the CEO play in oversight of activities of alumni groups, institutional centers, or similar bodies?

Sample Documentation

- Job descriptions clarifying the reporting structure for those directing fund-raising activities.
- Organizational charts establishing reporting relationships.
- Memos, minutes, and/or written correspondence establishing the role of the CEO in exercising control over fund raising.
- Policy and procedure statements or manuals on fund raising.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 5.3 (Institution-related entities)

- 5.3** For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs:
- (a) The legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity.
 - (b) The relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising from that relationship are clearly described in a formal, written manner.
 - (c) The institution demonstrates that (1) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (2) the fund-raising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution.

(Institution-related entities)

Rationale and Notes

It is common for institutions of higher education to create or have affiliations with independent, separately incorporated entities. Often these entities bear the name of the higher education institution. These separate entities are often formed to raise private gifts to supplement other institutional resources and to manage their distribution. Other entities assume responsibility for institutionally related activities such as managing hospitals, operating research enterprises, establishing centers of excellence, or funding and operating residence halls.

Any entity related to the institution and having as its primary purpose to support the institution or its programs can, at its best, be a major source of strength to the quality and success of the institution. However, at its worst, such a related entity can be an interfering body that uses its resources to exercise inappropriate control, influence, or management of the institution, or whose actions place the institution at risk. It is critical to assure that the institution does not become so reliant on an outside related entity that its autonomy is compromised and its continued functioning is put in jeopardy.

This standard expects that the legal authority and operating control within the institution's governance structure is clearly defined as it relates to these separate entities. There is also an expectation that any liability arising out of the relationship with the related entity is clearly described in a formal, written manner. Further, the Commission expects the institution's chief executive officer to control any fund-raising activities of that entity or to define the fund-raising activities in a formal, written manner to ensure that the activities further the mission of the institution.

NOTE

An institution is required to provide narrative and supporting documentation for each of the expectations embedded in the standard above. There should be a subheading addressing each letter.

Questions to Consider

- Are adequate definitions of legal authority and operating responsibility clearly stated in institutional documents?
- Within the institution's governance structure, what organization, office, or officer has legal authority and operating responsibility for dealing with outside entities?
- If an external entity has been established to support intercollegiate athletics, what evidence indicates that the institution's CEO has adequate information and control to ensure that the entity conducts activities in a manner consistent with the institution's mission and with other external oversight bodies without compromising the integrity of the institution?
- What are the essential elements of the contractual agreements between these outside entities and the institution?
- How do these agreements accurately describe the relationship between the entity and the institution?
- How does the agreement describe any institutional liability associated with that relationship?
- What is the mission of each entity, and is it consistent with the mission of the institution it supports?
- Does the financial position of the entity affect the financial soundness of the institution?
- What structures are in place to assure that the leadership of the entity and the institution are separate but work cooperatively? How is this evaluated?
- What evidence exists that (1) the CEO controls any of the fund raising of that entity or (2) the fund-raising activities of the entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution?

Sample Documentation

- Contracts, MOUs, or other formal (and signed) agreements that define the relationship between each related entity and the institution.
- Charters and bylaws indicating legal authority and operating control within the institution's governance structure for related entities.
- Mission statements for each related entity.
- Contracts or other formal agreements with third parties.
- Policies and regulations related to intercollegiate athletics and the CEO's oversight and relationship to outside entities.

- Memos, minutes, and/or written correspondence that show that either the CEO controls the fund-raising activities of the related entity, or documents that show that the fund-raising activities of the related entity are defined in a formal, written manner assuring that the activities further the mission of the institution.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

- CR 4.1 *(Governing board characteristics)*
- Standard 4.2.d *(Conflict of interest)*
- Standard 4.2.f *(External influence)*
- Standard 4.3 *(Multi-level governance)*
- Standard 5.2.a *(CEO control)*
- Standard 5.2.b *(Control of intercollegiate athletics)*
- Standard 5.2.c *(Control of fund-raising activities)*
- Standard 13.3 *(Financial responsibility)*
- Standard 13.5 *(Control of sponsored research/external funds)*

5.4 The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution. *(Qualified administrative/academic officers)*

Rationale and Notes

In order to ensure that an institution has effective leadership to accomplish its mission, the institution employs academic and administrative officers with the credentials and expertise appropriate to the duties and responsibilities associated with their positions. Administrator qualifications align with position descriptions. There is an expectation that these administrative and academic officers are regularly evaluated to allow feedback on performance.

This standard applies to key decision makers within the institution's governance structure. However, the standard does not apply to the chief executive as the employment and evaluation of the CEO are addressed in Standard 4.2.c *(CEO evaluation/selection)*. The institution should provide a rationale for the group of persons addressed by this standard because titles vary greatly across different institutions. Generally, this standard would address all executive-level officers, as well as directors of major academic units (e.g., academic deans). This standard requires professional judgment as to the appropriateness of the qualifications of persons in leadership positions.

NOTES

There are separate standards regarding policies pertaining to appointment and evaluation of other personnel [(Standard 5.5 (Personnel appointment and evaluation) and Standard 6.3 (Faculty appointment and evaluation)]. It would be appropriate to reference the current standard in those other standards if the evidence of evaluation of senior leadership appears only in Standard 5.4 (Qualified administrative/academic officers).

The Commission considers an evaluation cycle of every three years or less to meet the expectation of “regular” evaluation.

Questions to Consider

- Is the combination of credentials and experience appropriate for the positions held?
- Do qualifications align with published position descriptions?
- Does the institution follow its own expectations regarding credentials and experience, as reflected in position descriptions?
- For persons in leadership positions who have nontraditional qualifications for their positions, what is the reasoning underlying these appointments?
- Are policies and procedures in place for the regular evaluation of administrators?

Sample Documentation

- Organizational chart to clarify the leadership roles and the names of the persons to be reviewed.
- Position descriptions and details as to appropriate qualifications for each person to be reviewed.
- Résumés, as appropriate. Résumés should be current.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 5.5 *(Personnel appointment and evaluation)*

Standard 6.3 *(Faculty appointment and evaluation)*

5.5**The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of non-faculty personnel.** *(Personnel appointment and evaluation)***Rationale and Notes**

This standard indicates that institutions will publish policies describing conditions of appointment, employment, and evaluation that are periodically assessed and widely disseminated to demonstrate that the institution employs non-faculty personnel with sufficient qualifications to maintain its operations and to support the achievement of goals consistent with its educational mission. There is an expectation that an institution consistently follows its own policies.

NOTES

This standard does not apply to all full-time and part-time faculty [see Standard 6.3 (Faculty appointment and evaluation)]. The standard also does not apply to the institution's CEO [see Standard 4.2.c (CEO evaluation/selection)], nor does it apply to administrative and academic officers [see Standard 5.4 (Qualified administrative/academic officers)].

This standard is generally not applied to student workers, graduate assistants, and similar positions.

Questions to Consider

- Have personnel policies at the institution been approved through appropriate channels?
- Are the policies published and made accessible to persons affected by the policies?
- Can the institution demonstrate that it consistently follows its own policies and procedures regarding employment and evaluation of non-faculty personnel?
- Is there evidence regarding all three areas cited in the standard (appointment, employment, evaluation)?
- Are policies and procedures kept current through periodic review?

Sample Documentation

- Documents containing employment policies and procedures (e.g., employee handbooks).
- Evidence the policies are appropriately disseminated to those affected by them.
- If documentation is primarily provided electronically, details on that process and a means for reviewers to access the documents.
- Contracts, memorandums of understanding, or other agreements for outsourced services/programs.

- In cases where educational services or programs are outsourced, the mechanisms for ensuring that the practices for employment, appointment, and evaluation of personnel are comparable with those used by the institution.
- Collective bargaining agreements, if applicable.
- Evidence of a periodic review for the currency of such policies.
- Examples of how the institution ensures policies and procedures are implemented and enforced (e.g., search committee operations, HR office operations, a sample of redacted completed evaluations and not blank forms).

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC good practices: [Developing Policy and Procedures Documents](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 4.2.c (*CEO evaluation/selection*)

Standard 5.4 (*Qualified administrative/academic officers*)

Standard 6.3 (*Faculty appointment and evaluation*)