

The Association of Theological Schools Revised General Institution Accreditation Standards Concerning the Use of Technology in Theological Education

June, 2010 – Biennial Meeting of Presidents and Rectors, Montreal, Canada

1 Purpose, Planning, and Evaluation

1.2 Planning and evaluation

1.2.1 The purpose statement shall guide the institution in its comprehensive institutional planning and evaluation procedures and in making decisions regarding programs, allocation of resources including the use and support of educational technology, constituencies served, relationships with ecclesiastical bodies, global concerns, institutional flexibility, and other comparable matters.

2 Institutional Integrity

2.10 Institutions shall establish and enforce policies for the appropriate and ethical use of instructional technology, digital media, and the Internet that are consistent with the institution's educational purposes and environment.

3 The Theological Curriculum: Learning, Teaching, and Research

3.2.2 Teaching

3.2.2.2 Instructional methods should use the diversity of life experiences represented by the students, by faith communities, and by the larger cultural context. Instructional methods and the use of technology should be sensitive to the diversity of student populations, different learning styles of students, the importance of communities of learning, and the instructional goals. The integration of technology as a teaching tool and resource for learning shall include careful planning by faculty and administration to ensure adequate infrastructure, resources, training, and support.

3.2.2.3 Courses are a central place of interaction between teachers and learners. The way the instructor arranges the work and structures the class should encourage theological conversation. Courses and programs of study should reflect an awareness of the diversity of worldwide and local settings. In the development of new courses and the review of syllabi, faculty should interact with one another, with librarians, with their students, with the church, and with the developing fields of knowledge. Faculty should be appropriately involved in the consideration of ways in which technology might enhance or strengthen student learning.

5 Library and information resources

5.2 [Library] Contribution to Learning, Teaching, and Research

5.2.1 The library accomplishes its teaching responsibilities by meeting the bibliographic needs of the library's patrons; offering appropriate reference services; providing assistance and training in using information resources and communication technologies; and teaching information literacy, including research practices of effectively and ethically accessing, evaluating, and using information.

5.2.2 The library promotes theological learning by providing instructional programs and resources that encourage students and graduates to develop reflective and critical research and communication practices that prepare them to engage in lifelong learning.

5.2.4 The library should provide physical and online environments conducive to learning and scholarly interaction.

6 Faculty

In order for faculty members to accomplish their purposes, theological schools should assure them appropriate structure, support, and opportunities, including training for educational technology.

6.2 Faculty Role in Teaching

6.2.3 Full- and part-time faculty should be afforded opportunities to enhance teaching skills, including the use of educational technology as well as training in instructional design and in modes of advisement appropriate to distance programs, as a regular component of faculty development.

6.2.4 Appropriate resources shall be available to facilitate the teaching task, including but not limited to, classroom space, office space, educational technology, and access to scholarly materials, including library and other information resources.

6.2.5 Schools shall develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating faculty performance, including teaching competence and the use of educational technology. These mechanisms should involve faculty members and students, as well as administrators.

6.3 Faculty Role in Student Learning

6.3.2 To ensure the quality of learning, faculty should be appropriately involved in development of the library collection, educational technology, and other resources necessary for student learning.

9 Institutional Resources

9.4 Institutional Data information technology resources

9.4.1 To the extent that a theological school uses technology to deliver its educational programs, the school shall maintain adequate personnel and financial and technological resources to sustain its technology infrastructure.

9.4.2 For planning and evaluation, the school shall create and use various kinds of institutional data and information technology to determine the extent to which the institution is attaining its academic and institutional purposes and objectives. To the extent possible, it should use the most effective current technologies for creating, storing, and transmitting this information within the institution, and it should share appropriate information thus generated among institutions and organizations. The kinds of information and the means by which that information is gathered, stored, retrieved, and analyzed should be appropriate to the size and complexity of the institution.

9.8 Instructional technology resources

Institutions using instructional technology to enhance face-to-face courses and/or provide online only courses shall be intentional in addressing matters of coherence between educational values and choice of media, recognizing that the learning goals of graduate education should guide the choice of digital resources, that teaching and learning maintains its focus on the formation and knowledge of religious leaders, and that the school is utilizing its resources in ways that most effectively accomplish its purpose. They should also establish policies regarding the appropriate training for and use of these resources.

9.8.1 Students should be adequately informed regarding the necessary skills and mastery of technology to participate fully in the programs to which they are admitted. Institutions are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to gain these skills as part of their program of study.

9.8.2 Sufficient technical support services should ensure that faculty are freed to focus upon their central tasks of teaching and facilitating learning. Support services should create systems for faculty development and assistance to ensure consistent, effective, and timely support.

9.8.2.1 Timely technological support services should include (1) staff with a sufficiently high level of technical skills to ensure student facility in handling software and the technological aspects of course offerings and (2) the systemic evaluation and upgrading of technological resources and services consistent with the learning goals of theological scholarship.

9.8.2.2 A technological and support services program should include technological training and should ensure adequate support services personnel for faculty and students.

9.8.3 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for the use of instructional technology that involve appropriate groups of people in the evaluation process.