



**Handbook to Guide Self-Study**  
**With emphasis on Institutional  
and student assessment**

**2007-2008 AY**

**The American Academy for Liberal Education**

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# **AALE Standards Handbook to Guide Self-Study**

## Part I. Educational Standards

### A. Liberal Learning Assessment

#### Standard One: Effective Reasoning:

1. Have students demonstrated attainment of the necessary foundational abilities of effective reasoning during the first year of coursework or at the conclusion of the general education program?
2. Have students demonstrated the ability to frame reasonable arguments, support them with relevant evidence, and anticipate likely counter-arguments, along with the complimentary ability to analyze arguments rationally, evaluate the evidence supporting them, and frame reasonable and persuasive counter-arguments?
3. Have students demonstrated the ability to recognize and evaluate new information into the existing frameworks of knowledge, and adapt those frameworks as necessary or appropriate?
4. Have students demonstrated the ability to identify and apply standards of intellectual rigor or precision appropriate to different kinds of subject matter?
5. Have students demonstrated the ability to engage in reasoned and sustained discussions of important issues or questions?

Also, have students demonstrated the ability to elucidate orally and in writing different or opposing perspectives evenhandedly and dispassionately?

#### Standard Two: Broad and Deep Learning

1. Have students demonstrated a familiarity with the essential knowledge, principles, and methods proper to the various subject areas or disciplines represented in the general education curriculum?
2. Have students demonstrated the ability to relate the different subject areas or disciplines represented in the general education curriculum to one another in cogent and significant ways?
3. Have students demonstrated a thorough grasp of the basic knowledge, principles, or methods proper to one or more of the major disciplines or their equivalent?
4. Have students demonstrated the ability to relate and integrate the knowledge gained in the general education curriculum?

5. Have students demonstrated a broad understanding of the political and historical foundations of American government and society, together with a habit of bringing relevant knowledge of past thought and events to bear on contemporary issues?

6. Have students demonstrated a thoughtful grasp of the principles and history of liberal and democratic institutions and government generally, as well as of their practical workings, along with a proven ability to take up the responsibilities and privileges of liberal and democratic citizenship on campus, in one's immediate community, or in larger circles of human society?

7. Have students demonstrated the ability to discuss the salient works and issues of Western history, together with a habit of bringing relevant knowledge of past thought and events to bear on contemporary questions?

8. Have students demonstrated an appreciation for the salient features of the political and cultural history of at least one non-Western (or in the case of students of non-Western origin, at least one non-native) culture, along with the ability to relate that history to the student's own native culture in intellectually cogent and significant ways?

Also, in relation to questions 7 & 8, have students demonstrated the ability to communicate effectively in an appropriate foreign or non-native tongue language? This ability is a natural gateway to such studies and a complement to cross-cultural or comparative learning.

#### Standard Three: Inclination to Inquire

1. Does the program foster the development of a reflective and inquisitive turn of the mind, one that actively weighs the judgments and information put to it by authorities, by peer groups, by conventional wisdom, or by the habit of its own convictions?

2. Does the program foster the ability to question and assess one's own knowledge, abilities, and performance accurately and without deception, along with the willingness and initiative to seek out and acquire relevant knowledge and training in areas of weakness?

3. Does the program foster the ability to bring to bear the knowledge and skills acquired in academic pursuits to important issues, questions, and endeavors outside the academy and the disposition to seek out new knowledge and skills in and beyond the classroom?

4. Does the program foster the development of a personally significant and continually examined perspective on historically and philosophically important answers to the questions, "What is the common good?" and "What is the best social order?"

#### B. Mission

##### Standard Four:

1. Are the program's promotional and informational materials and activities truthful, accurate, and current with regard to its educational mission and purposes?

2. Does the program regularly review its mission statement or statement of purpose as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

3. Does the program have well-defined educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees and certificates that it awards, and are these objectives stated

clearly, published and disseminated appropriately, and govern expectations for student achievement?

Also, does the program regularly review its educational objectives as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

4. Does the program agree to inform the Academy of any substantive changes to its mission, organization, or educational objectives?

Standard Five:

1. Does the program have a clear, published, and appropriately disseminated policy defining its commitment to liberty of thought and freedom of speech?

2. Are any limitations on freedom of speech, related to the program's affirmation of particular religious principles or beliefs, clearly specified, published, and appropriately disseminated, and are these limitations clearly described in the program's recruitment and informational materials for students, faculty, and administrative personnel?

C. General Education and Curriculum

Standard Six:

1. Do the program's catalogs, student handbooks, or other publications clearly and accurately describe the following: admission requirements; academic requirements and responsibilities for enrolled students; policies regarding academic dismissal, suspension, probation, and readmission; policies regarding the collection and retention of student records; and procedures for lodging appeals or complaints?

Also, is this information made readily available to faculty, prospective students, and students enrolled in the program?

2. Does the program regularly review its admission requirements and requirements for enrolled students as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

3. Does the program ensure that information concerning admissions requirements and requirements for enrolled students is truthfully and accurately communicated by the program's admissions staff and representatives to prospective students?

4. Does the program ensure that its promotional and informational materials and activities are clear, accurate, and current with regard to its admissions requirements for enrolled students, as well as its enrollment, retention, graduation, graduate acceptance, and job placement data, and is this information made readily available to prospective students, to students enrolled in the program, and to the general public?

Standard Seven:

1. Is the program's catalog, as well as its promotional and informational materials, clear, accurate, and current with regard to its general education requirements?

Also, are they clear, accurate, and current with regard to placement and exemption policies for particular courses within the general education requirements, and is this information published and made readily available to prospective and enrolled students?

2. Does the program have well-defined policies concerning the transfer of general education credit from other institutions, and do these policies ensure that incoming transfer students fulfill the requirement that not less than one third of a student's course work is taken within the general education requirement or equivalents?

In addition, are these policies communicated clearly and accurately by the program's admissions staff and representatives, as well as in its published informational material?

Standard Eight:

1. Are the program's catalog and promotional and informational materials clear, accurate, and current with regard to its general education course and subject requirements, and is this information published and made readily available to prospective and enrolled students?

2. Does the program have a regular process for general education curriculum formation and review, and are these curricular offerings and programs not requiring governing board approval subject to appropriate governance and procedures?

3. Does the program have well-defined policies concerning the transfer of general education credit from other institutions, and do these policies ensure that incoming transfer students fulfill the program's general education course and subject requirements or reasonable equivalents?

In addition, are these policies communicated clearly and accurately by the program's admissions staff and representatives, as well as in its published informational material?

Standard Nine:

Does the assessment take into consideration the singular mission of the institution?

Is assessment consistent across all students and subjects?

Does the program allow students to meet educational goals set for them?

Is the program able to support the learning required to meet these goals?

Are the faculty reviewed as part of the assessment, so as to improve teaching and learning effectiveness?

Does the program regularly review its measures and instruments of assessments as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

Does the program ensure that students and faculty have a clear understanding of the educational goals and requirements of its general education program, as well as of the methods of evaluation used?

Are the faculty responsible for the evaluation of student achievement?

Standard Ten:

1. Does the program regularly review its general education, major, and degree requirements in the light of its mission, educational objectives, and commonly accepted academic norms, and are the roles of the faculty, administration, and governing board in this process clearly defined?

Also, are those activities and programs not requiring governing board approval subject to appropriate governance procedures?

2. Does the program ensure that students and faculty have a clear understanding of the educational goals and requirements of its majors, as well as of the methods of evaluation used?

3. Does the program ensure a reasonable correspondence between program length and degree awarded and between credit hours awarded and clock hours of instructional time, including lectures, laboratory, and other learning experiences?

4. Does the program faculty determine residency requirements, number of courses or credit hours required for each major or degree, minimum acceptable grade point averages, appropriate means of assessing student learning, and allowable time frames for degree completion?

5. Is there at least one full-time, competent faculty member responsible for oversight and coordination for each major?

6. Are the program's promotional and informational materials and activities clear, accurate, and current with regard to its curriculum content and structure, major requirements, and degree program requirements?

In addition, is this information published and made readily available to prospective students and is communicated clearly and accurately by the program's admissions staff and representatives, as well as by its academic advisors?

Standard Eleven:

1. Does the program ensure that students and faculty have a clear understanding of the educational purpose and goals in its English writing requirements?

2. Does the program regularly review its requirements, instruction, and evidence of student learning in English writing as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

D. Teaching and Educational Resources

Standard Twelve:

1. Does the program employ faculty who are qualified to carry out its educational purposes, who are properly prepared to teach the courses to which they are assigned, and who demonstrate effective teaching?

2. Does the program employ regular procedures for monitoring teaching effectiveness?

3. Does the program observe regular procedures for recruitment, appointment, evaluation, and promotion of its faculty, both full and part-time, and do these procedures honor excellence in teaching and, where appropriate, in scholarship as well.

Also, are these procedures published and appropriately disseminated?

4. Does the program maintain appropriate documentation of academic credentials for all faculty, both full and part-time, and makes clear through its publications the status, titles, and academic credentials of its faculty?

Standard Thirteen:

1. Does the program define and enforce class size or course enrollment policies that are appropriate to its mission and to the educational objectives of its general education curriculum as well as its majors?

2. Does the program regularly review its class size and enrollment policies as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

Standard Fourteen:

1. Does the program regularly review and assess its instructional and advisement policies to ensure that these are appropriate to its mission and to the educational objectives of its general education curriculum, as well as its majors?

2. Does the institution regularly review and assess its academic counseling policies to ensure that these are appropriate to its mission and to the educational objectives of its academic programs?

Standard Fifteen:

1. Does the program own or provide its students with access to library and other information resources adequate to the demands of its educational programs?

2. Does the program regularly assess the adequacy of its library and other information resources as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance and resources?

## ***Part II. AALE Program Standards***

### **Institutional and Program Finances**

1. Does the program ensure that it has financial resources to support the program applying for accreditation.

Moreover, does the institution's financial history indicate that it is financially stable and able to support all its functions in a continuous manner consistent with the Academy's standards and with the institution's mission and educational objectives?

2. Does the institution ensure that per student funding of the program applying for accreditation compares favorably with per student funding of its other academic programs?

3. Does the institution undergo annual fiscal audits by independent certified public accountants or an appropriate governmental auditing agency?

In addition, does the institution submit or agree to submit the results of such audits to the Academy and other agencies as required?

4. Does the institution utilize an accounting system that follows generally accepted principles of institutional accounting as these appear in the appropriate NACUBO or AICPA regulations?

#### International Students

5. On the subject of enrolling international students, does the program ensure that their students are admitted and served responsibly, and does the program also ensure that their admissions staff and representatives clearly and accurately convey information concerning admissions requirements and financial obligations to prospective international students?

Also, are the program's academic policies, requirements, and expectations the same for international students as for other students?

#### Student Athletics

6. Does the institution ensure that its intercollegiate athletics program adhere to an officially approved written statement of policy consistent with the institution's mission and educational objectives, and are the academic policies, requirements, and expectations the same for students involved in intercollegiate athletics as for other students?

#### Student Complaints

7. Does the program permit the Academy to review student complaints on matters related to the Academy's measures of accreditation, and does the institution make available to students in appropriate way the Academy's mailing address, e-mail, and telephone number?

#### Student Records

8. Does the program maintain appropriate academic records for students and secures these records adequately?

Also, does the program have well-defined and published policies concerning the types of information to be included in students' permanent records and security, release, retention, and disposal of such information?

9. Does the program have clear and published policies concerning the confidentiality of student academic record and students' right to privacy?

#### Facilities

10. Does the program provide for its students and faculty a setting and atmosphere conducive to inquiry, discussion, learning, and contemplation?

11. Do the program's instructional, research, co-curricular, and support facilities prove adequate to the needs of the program in relation to its stated mission, educational objectives and programs, and other integral activities?

12. Does the program regularly review the adequacy of its instructional, research, co-curricular, and support facilities in relation to its stated mission, programs, and activities as part of its ongoing efforts to assess and improve its performance?

Branch Campuses, Off-Campus Teaching Sites, Distance Education Programs

13. Does the program ensure that the educational standards of degree-granting programs offered at branch campuses, off-campus teaching sites, or through distance learning media conform to those in force on the main campus?

14. Does the program provide students doing coursework at branch campuses, off-campus teaching sites, and through distance learning media with adequate library and information access and support services?