Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation

Authority and Standards

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 201: Authority and Standards

Part 201 Chapter 1: Authority of the Commission

Rule 1.1 Authority of the Commission.

(1) There is hereby created the Commission on College Accreditation. Said commission shall be composed of the Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Commissioner of Higher Education, or their designees, and three (3) additional members, one (1) of whom shall be selected by the foregoing two (2) members and who shall represent the private colleges within the state, and two (2) of whom shall be selected by the Mississippi Association of Colleges. The latter three (3) members shall each serve for a term of three (3) years.

(2) The commission shall meet and organize by electing from among its membership a chairman, a vice chairman and a secretary. The commission shall keep full and complete minutes and records of all its proceedings and actions.

(3) The commission shall have the power and authority, and it shall be its duty, to prepare an approved list of community, junior and senior colleges and universities or other entities which offer one or more postsecondary academic degrees and are domiciled, incorporated or otherwise located in the State of Mississippi. Postsecondary academic degrees include, but are not limited to, associate, bachelor, masters, and doctorate degrees. The commission shall adopt standards which are in keeping with the best educational practices in accreditation and receive reports from the institutions seeking to be placed on the approved list.

(4) The above-described community, junior and senior colleges and universities or other entities must be approved annually by the commission in order to grant diplomas of graduation, degrees or offer instruction.

(5) The commission shall petition the chancery court of the county in which a person or agent offers one or more postsecondary academic degrees subject to the provisions of this chapter or advertises for the offering of such degrees without first obtained approval by the commission, for an order enjoining such offering or advertising. The court may grant such injunctive relief upon a showing that the respondent named in the petition is offering or advertising one or more postsecondary academic degrees without having obtained prior approval of the commission. The Attorney General or the district attorney of the district, including the county in which such action is brought, shall, upon request of the commission, represent the commission in bringing any such action.

(6) The provision of this section shall not apply to private schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or to the proprietary schools as defined in Sections 75-60-3, 75-60-4 and 75-60-5.

(7) The Commission on College Accreditation may promulgate rules and regulations and establish appropriate fees for the implementation of this section.

(8) The commission shall have the power and authority, and it shall be its duty, to execute site visits when deemed necessary by the commission. The members of the commission and commission-appointed evaluation teams shall receive reasonable raveling expenses and other authorized expenses incurred in the performance of commission duties, together with other expenses of the operation of the commission. The members of the Commission on College Accreditation shall serve without salary compensation but shall receive a per diem and mileage as authorized by law including time of going to and returning from site visits of said commission, together with actual travel and hotel expenses incident to the site visits of the commission, and in the discharge of duties prescribed by the commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Part 201 Chapter 2: Meetings of the Commission

Rule 2.1 Meetings of the Commission. The commission will meet annually prior to July 1. Additional meetings may be called, as necessary, by the chairman of the commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Part 201 Chapter 3: General Provisions (GP)

Introduction. Each institution that seeks accreditation as specified in § 37-101-241, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall supply a detailed statement of how it is meeting or proposes to meet the standards delineated in Part 201 Chapter 4 Standards and Regulations and the provisions of Part 201 Chapter 3 General Provisions.

No academic degree-granting institution shall operate in the State without first receiving approval from the Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA or commission). Registration with the Secretary of State shall not constitute State authority, accreditation or approval to grant degrees or offer courses and programs leading to academic degrees.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.1 For general purpose institutions.

Rule 3.1.1 The commission recognizes the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (COC-SACS) accrediting commission. At minimum, an institution which holds official

accreditation by the COC-SACS will be considered for full accreditation with the commission. Each general purpose institution that has full COC-SACS accreditation must supply the commission with documentation of its COC-SACS accreditation status. Accreditation will be reviewed annually and a list of institutions and their relationship to the commission shall be published annually after July 1.

Rule 3.1.2 The commission will consider applications for MCCA accreditation from academic degree-granting institutions located outside Mississippi provided, however, the following conditions are met by the applicant institution:

Rule 3.1.2.1 The applicant institution is accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies*; and

Rule 3.1.2.2 Evidence is provided by the applicant institution that the course/program cannot be met by existing higher education institutions in Mississippi.

**(1) Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; (2) Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education; (3)New England Association of Schools and Colleges; (4) North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Higher Learning Commission; (5) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities; and (6) Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WC/WJ).*

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.2 For Bible colleges.

Rule 3.2.1 The commission recognizes the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) accrediting commission. At minimum, an institution which holds official accreditation by ABHE will be considered for full accreditation by the commission. Each Bible college that has full ABHE accreditation must supply the commission with documentation of its ABHE accreditation status.

Rule 3.2.2 Accreditation will be reviewed annually and a list of institutions and their relationship to the commission shall be published annually after July 1.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.3 For theological seminaries.

Rule 3.3.1 The commission recognizes the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accrediting commission. At minimum, an institution which holds official

accreditation by ATS will be considered for full accreditation by the commission. Each theological seminary that has full ATS accreditation must supply the commission with documentation of its ATS accreditation status.

Rule 3.3.2 Accreditation will be reviewed annually and a list of institutions and their relationship to the commission shall be published annually after July 1.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.4. Colleges and universities for which commission regulations, standards, policies, procedures and provisions do not apply include those colleges and universities that are under the authority of the Mississippi Commission on Proprietary School and College Registration or other approval boards and agencies listed at § 75-60-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.5 Accreditation will be reviewed annually and a list of institutions and their relationship to the commission shall be published annually after July 1.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.6 Provisional accreditation may be granted to the institution which has been in opration five (5) or more years that has made application to MCCA and is progressing toward accreditation with a commission-recognized accrediting agency. Provisional accreditation may also be granted to the institution that is located outside Mississippi, which is accredited by a commission-recognized accrediting agency. The institution must continually demonstrate tat it meets/can meet commission standards, regulations, provisions, procedures and policies. Provisional accreditation may be granted for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.7 Conditional accreditation may be granted to an institution that has been in operation less than five (5) years; the commission will evaluate the extent of the institution's compliance with SR 4.2.5 (Resources and Stability), SR 4.2.10, and 4.2.11 (Faculty Qualifications and Faculty Size), and SR 4.2.12 (Programs/Curricula) and the institution's potential for achieving accreditation. If conditional approval is granted, the institution must submit to the commission documentation and a plan and time line for complying with all commission standards, regulations, procedures, provisions and policies and completing the accreditation process with a commission-recognized accrediting agency. Conditional accreditation may be granted for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.8 A commission-appointed evaluation team may visit the institution if deemed necessary by the commission, and shall visit the institution along with any commission-recognized

accrediting agency during each of its site visits to the institution. Said visits shall be at the expense of the institution.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.9 Each institution with conditional or provisional accreditation must supply the commission with, at minimum, an annual progress report no later than April 1 and copies of any correspondence received from any accrediting agency. Other documents including site visit reports and documents commonly included as part of the accreditation process must be made available upon request by the commission. The commission may request more frequent progress reports.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 3.10. Each institution holding full accreditation must notify the commission within thirty (30) days regarding requests to any accrediting agencies for substantive changes, and must provide copies of any correspondence received from any accrediting agency stating formal action taken by the accrediting agency.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Part 201 Chapter 4: Standards and Regulations (SR)

Introduction. If a standard does not apply to the institution, the institution shall provide a detailed written justification and rational as to why the standard does not apply.

For purposes of this section, commission-approved accrediting agency means any of the six regional accrediting agencies, the Association of Theological Schools accrediting commission and the Association of Biblical Higher Education Accrediting Commission.

Rule 4.1 No academic degree-granting institution shall operate in the State without first receiving approval from the Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA or commission). Registration with the Secretary of State shall not constitute State authority, accreditation, or approval to grant degrees or offer courses and programs leading to academic degrees. To meet the requirements for institutional accreditation or the renewal of existing institutional accreditation, the institution shall be in compliance or progressing toward compliance with State standards, regulations, provisions, procedures and policies including but not limited to the standards set out below and/or the provisions in Part 201 Chapter 3.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 4.2 Institutions shall meet the standards of quality for institutional accreditation as it relates to institutional mission, governance, administration, distinction of roles, resources and stability, financial records, evaluation and assessment, admissions, faculty qualification and size, curriculum, general education, credit for work completed outside a collegiate setting, library,

facilities, academic records, accurate and fair disclosures, academic advising and counseling, and student rights and responsibilities.

Rule 4.2.1 Mission. The institution has a clearly defined and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.

Rule 4.2.2 Governance. The institution shall have a governing board consisting of at least five members. The institution's governing board shall be an active policy-making body, focused on promoting the mission of the institution, and shall exercise its authority to ensure that the mission of the institution is carried out. Members of the board shall represent the interests of the institution's constituencies of faculty, students, and supporters. The governing board shall ensure that the institution complies with Commission requirements.

Rule 4.2.3 Administration. The character, education, and experience in higher education of governing board members, administrators, supervisors, counselors, agents, and other institutional officers shall be such as may reasonably ensure that the institution can maintain the standards of the Commission and progress to accreditation within the time limits set by the Commission and Commission-recognized accrediting agency. The chief academic officer shall hold an appropriate graduate academic degree, and shall demonstrate sound aptitude for and experience with curriculum development and assessment; accreditation standards and processes as well as all relevant state regulations; leadership and development of faculty, including the promotion of scholarship, research, and service; and the promotion of student success. The institutional officers shall demonstrate a record of effective leadership in administering the institution.

Rule 4.2.4 Distinction of Roles. There shall be sufficient distinction among the roles and personnel of the governing board of the institution, the administration, and faculty to ensure their appropriate separation and independence.

Rule 4.2.5 Resources and Stability. The institution must have a sound financial base, demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. The institution must, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provide and support student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections as well as to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered; those collections and resources must be sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs, as applicable.

Rule 4.2.6 Financial Records. Financial records and reports of the institution shall be kept and made separate and distinct from those of any affiliated or sponsoring person or entity. Financial records and reports shall be kept in accordance with the guidelines of the National Association of College and University Business Officers as set forth in *College and University Business Administration,* current addition. An annual independent audit of all fiscal accounts of the educational institution shall be authorized by the governing board, shall be performed by a properly authorized certified public accountant or an appropriate governmental auditing agency*, and shall be made available to the Commission upon request.

*Refer to College and University Business Administration, current edition, available from the National Association of College and University Business Officers, One Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, DE 30036; and Audits of Colleges and Universities and Audits of Not-for-Profit Organizations, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Rule 4.2.7 Evaluation and Assessment. Continual and effective assessment, planning, and evaluation of all aspects of the institution shall be conducted to advance and improve the institution. These aspects include, but are not limited to, the academic program of teaching, research, and public services, if applicable; administration; financial planning and control; student services; facilities and equipment, and auxiliary enterprises.

Rule 4.2.8 Quality Enhancement. The institution shall provide to the Commission upon request and in all applications for approval evidence of its implementation of a plan for the systematic assessment of its effectiveness in promoting the quality of student achievement and development.

Rule 4.2.9 Admissions.

Rule 4.2.9.1 Upon the admission of a student to any undergraduate program, the institution shall document the student's level of preparation to undertake college level work by obtaining proof of the student's college record, high school graduation or General Educational Development (GED) certification and by assessing the academic skills of each entering student with an instrument approved by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE) administered by the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and otherwise complying with state standards, policies, procedures and requirements. If a GED is presented to be valid, the score must be at or above the passing level set by the ACE. The institution shall provide

an effective program of remediation for students diagnosed with deficiencies in their preparation for collegiate study.

Rule 4.2.9.2 Upon the admission of a student to any graduate program, the institution shall document that the student is prepared to undertake graduate-level work by obtaining proof that the student holds a baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by the Commission or a Commission-approved accrediting agency(1) to offer baccalaureate degrees, or a degree from a foreign institution equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. The procedures used by the institution for establishing the equivalency of a foreign degree shall be consistent with the standards of evaluation approved by the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials or its successor; or reviews from evaluation services provided through the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers.

Rule 4.2.10 Faculty Qualifications. The character, education, and experience in higher education of the faculty shall be such as may reasonably ensure that the students will receive an education consistent with the objectives of the course or program of study.

Rule 4.2.10.1 The institution employs competent members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualification of its faculty.

Rule 4.2.10.2 Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

Rule 4.2.10.3 Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

Rule 4.2.10.4 Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline.

Rule 4.2.10.5 Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

Rule 4.2.10.6 Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

Rule 4.2.11 Faculty Size. There shall be a sufficient number of faculty holding full-time teaching appointments who are resident and accessible to the students to ensure continuity and stability of the education program, adequate educational association between students and faculty and among the faculty members, and adequate opportunity for proper preparation for instruction and professional growth by faculty members. At the associate and baccalaureate levels, there shall be at least one full-time faculty member in each program. At the graduate level, there shall be at least four full-time members in each program.

Rule 4.2.12 Programs/Curricula.

Rule 4.2.12.1 The quality, content, and sequence of each course, curriculum, or program of instruction, training, or study shall be appropriate to the purpose of the institution and shall be such that the institution may reasonably and adequately achieve the stated objectives of the course or program. Each program shall adequately cover the breadth of knowledge of the discipline taught and course work must build on the knowledge of previous courses to increase the rigor of instruction and the learning of students in the

discipline. Substantially all of the courses in the areas of specialization required for each degree program shall be offered in organized classes by the institution. An institution may offer no more than a very limited amount of for-credit coursework that does not directly relate to approved programs.

Rule 4.2.12.2 An academic associate degree must consist of at least 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours and not more than 66 semester credit hours or 99 quarter credit hours. A baccalaureate degree must consist of at least 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours. A master's degree must consist of at least 30- semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of graduate level work past the baccalaureate degree.

Rule 4.2.12.3 Courses designed to correct deficiencies, remedial courses for associate and baccalaureate programs, and leveling courses for graduate programs, shall not count toward requirements for completion of the degree.

Rule 4.2.12.4 The degree level, degree designation, and the designation of the major course of study shall be appropriate to the curriculum offered and shall be accurately listed on the student's diploma and transcript.

Rule 4.2.13 General Education.

Rule 4.2.13.1 Each academic associate degree program shall contain a general education component consisting of at least 15 semester credit hours or the equivalent. Each baccalaureate degree program shall contain a general education component consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent.

Rule 4.2.13.2 This component shall be drawn from each of the following areas: Humanities and Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. It shall include courses to develop skills in written and oral communication and basic computer instruction.

Rule 4.2.13.3 The applicant institution may arrange to have all or part of the general education component taught by another institution, provided that:

Rule 4.2.13.3.1 the applicant institution's faculty shall design the general education requirement;

Rule 4.2.13.3.2 there shall be a written agreement between the institutions specifying the applicant institutions' general education requirements and the manner in which they will be met by the providing institution;

Rule 4.2.13.3.3 at least one-half of the courses shall be offered in organized classes; and

Rule 4.2.13.3.4. the providing institution shall be accredited by a Commission-recognized accrediting agency.

Rule 4.2.14 Noncredit to Credit.

Rule 4.2.14.1 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience.

Rule 4.2.14.2 In no instance may credit be awarded for life experience per se or merely for years of service in a position or job.

Rule 4.2.15 Library.

Rule 4.2.15.1 The institution shall have in its possession or direct control, properly catalogued, and readily available to its students and faculty a sufficient quality and variety of library holdings to support adequately its own curriculum. In addition, the institution shall supply access to educational resources appropriate to support its programs that are available by electronic delivery, including access to the Internet, and shall make these educational resources available in an active and effective manner.

Rule 4.2.15.2 The institution shall have adequate library facilities for the library holdings, space for study, and workspace for the librarian and library staff.

Rule 4.2.15.3 The librarian shall hold a graduate degree in library science from an institution accredited by a Commission-recognized accrediting agency. The librarian shall have authority to select and acquire resources with funds in the library budget, have interaction with faculty sufficient to ensure a library collection that supports the courses and programs

offered, and have adequate interaction with students to support the library and research needs of the students.

Rule 4.2.15.4 Arrangements made with other libraries for the use of library materials shall be formalized in writing, the collection shall be validated by the institution to be appropriate for the program being offered, records of usage by the students shall be kept, and the library shall be reasonably accessible to the students and faculty.

Rule 4.2.16 Facilities. The institution shall have adequate space, equipment, and instructional materials to provide education of good quality. Student housing owned, maintained, or approved by the institution, if any, shall be appropriate, safe, and adequate.

Rule 4.2.17 Academic Records. The institution shall securely and permanently maintain adequate records of each student's academic performance.

Rule 4.2.17.1 The records for each student shall contain:

Rule 4.2.17.1.1 student contact and identification information, including address and telephone number;

Rule 4.2.17.1.2 records of admission documents, such as high school diploma or GED (if undergraduate) or undergraduate degree (if graduate);

Rule 4.2.17.1.3 records of all courses attempted, including grade; completion status of the student, including the diploma, degree or award conferred to the student; and

Rule 4.2.17.1.4 any other information typically contained in academic records.

Rule 4.2.17.2 Two copies of said records shall be maintained in secure places.

Rule 4.2.17.3 If the institution discontinues operation, the chief executive officer or other responsible official shall have the duty to convey all student records, including financial aid disposition, to a safe place for storage (preferably electronic storage) and shall notify the Commission within sixty (60) days of the storage address and applicable fees; and subsequently, of any changes in storage location. The records of students shall be available for reproduction as requested by students.

Rule 4.2.18 Accurate and Fair Representation in Publications, Advertising, and Promotion.

Rule 4.2.18.1 Neither the institution nor its agents or other representatives shall engage in advertising recruiting, sales, collection, financial credit, or other practices of any type that are false, deceptive, misleading, or unfair. Likewise, all publications, by any medium, shall represent accurately and fairly the institution, its programs, available resources, tuition and fees, requirements, and accreditation status.

Rule 4.2.18.2 The institution shall provide students, prospective students prior to enrollment, and other interested persons with a catalog containing, at minimum, the following information:

Rule 4.2.18.2.1 the institution's mission;

Rule 4.2.18.2.2 a statement of admissions policies;

Rule 4.2.18.2.3 information describing the purpose, length, and objectives of the program or programs offered by the institution;

Rule 4.2.18.2.4 the schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study;

Rule 4.2.18.2.5 cancellation and refund policies;

Rule 4.2.18.2.6 a definition of the unit of credit as it applies at the institution;

Rule 4.2.18.2.7 an explanation of satisfactory progress as it applies at the institution, including an explanation of the grading or marking system;

Rule 4.2.18.2.8 the institution's calendar, including the beginning and ending dates for each instructional term, holidays, and registration dates;

Rule 4.2.18.2.9 a complete listing of each regularly employed faculty member showing name, area of assignment, rank, and each earned degree held, including degree level, degree designation, and institution that awarded the degree;

Rule 4.2.18.2.10 a complete listing of each administrator showing name, title, area of assignment, and each earned

degree held, including degree level, degree designation, and institution that awarded the degree;

Rule 4.2.18.2.11 a statement of legal control with the names of the trustees, directors, and officers of the corporation;

Rule 4.2.18.2.12 a complete listing of all scholarships offered, if any;

Rule 4.2.18.2.13 a statement describing the nature and extent of available student services;

Rule 4.2.18.2.14 complete and clearly stated information about the transferability of credit to other postsecondary institutions including two-year and four-year colleges and universities;

Rule 4.2.18.2.15 any such other material facts concerning the institution and the program or course of instruction as are reasonably likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll therein; and

Rule 4.2.18.2.16 any disclosures specified by the Commission or defined in Commission standards, policies and procedures.

Rule 4.2.18.3 The cancellation and refund policy of the institution shall be fair and shall be applied equitably.

Rule 4.2.18.4 The institution shall provide to each prospective student, newly-enrolled student, and returning student, complete and clearly presented information indicating the institution's current graduation rate by program and, if required by the Commission, job placement rate by program.

Rule 4.2.18.5 Any special requirements, or limitations, of program offerings must be made explicit in writing. Either a separate section in the catalog or a brochure separate from the catalog may accomplish this. However, if a brochure is produced, the student must also be given the regular catalog.

Rule 4.2.18.6 Upon satisfactory completion of the program of study, the student shall be given appropriate educational credentials indicating the degree level, degree designation, and the

designation of the major course of study, and a transcript accurately listing the information typically found on such a document, subject to institutions' obligation, if any, to cooperate with the rules and regulations governing state and federally guaranteed student loans.

Rule 4.2.19 Academic Advising and Counseling. The institution shall provide an effective program of academic advising for all students enrolled. The program shall include orientation to the academic program, academic and personal counseling, career information and planning, placement assistance, and testing services.

Rule 4.2.20 Student Rights and Responsibilities. The institution shall establish and adhere to a clear and fair policy regarding due process in disciplinary matters, and publish this policy in a handbook, which shall include other rights and responsibilities of the students. This handbook shall be supplied to each student upon enrollment in the institution.

Rule 4.2.21 Records Storage (Institution Closures). Within sixty (60) days of its closure, the institution shall inform the Commission of its closure and must provide information to the Commission as set out in 5.5. The records of students shall be available for reproduction as requested by students. The Commission must be kept informed where students may obtain student financial and academic records.

Rule 4.2.22 Registration with Secretary of State. If not already incorporated or qualified to do business in the State of Mississippi, an institution shall apply to the Secretary of State for Articles of Incorporation or, in the case of a non-domesticated corporation, a Certificate of Authority; and submit to the Commission a copy of such Articles or Certificate, along with the application for accreditation.

Registration with the Secretary of State shall not constitute state authority, accreditation or approval to grant degrees or offer courses and programs leading to academic degrees.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Part 201 Chapter 5: Procedures (P)

Introduction. For purposes of this section, MCCA-approved accrediting agency means any of the six regional accrediting agencies, the Association of Theological Schools accrediting commission and the Association of Biblical Higher Education accrediting commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.1. All institutions seeking accreditation

Rule 5.1.1 Submit a written request for an application via regular mail along with a non-refundable fee of $100.

Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Rule 5.1.2 If not already incorporated or qualified to do business in the State of Mississippi, an institution shall apply to the Secretary of State for Articles of Incorporation or, in the case of a non-domesticated corporation, a Certificate of Authority; and submit to the commission a copy of such Articles or Certificate along with the application for accreditation.

Mississippi Secretary of State
P. O. Box 136
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0136
601.359.1633 or 800.256.3494

Any institution issued a charter of incorporation or certificate of authority by the Secretary of State shall not be authorized to grant diplomas of graduation or degrees until such time as the institution has been granted conditional, provisional or full accreditation by the commission.

Rule 5.1.3 Submit the completed application along with a non-refundable application fee of $3,000 to the Commission on College Accreditation at least four months before the annual meeting. The commission considers complete applications at its annual meeting, which occurs in May or June.

Rule 5.1.4 The chair of the commission and a commission-appointed evaluation team may visit the institution, at the expense of the applicant institution, at a pre-arranged time; may confer with administration officers, faculty, students, and other individuals; and may make such an examination as is necessary to give an accurate reflection of the institution's status.

Rule 5.1.5 The commission will review the application submitted by the institution and, if applicable, the report of the evaluation team, and will make a determination as to whether the institution shall be granted conditional, provisional or full accreditation.

Rule 5.1.6 If granted conditional or provisional accreditation, the accreditation shall be effective for a maximum period of one year from the date of issuance and may be extended for not more than three (3) years, provided that a good faith effort has been made by the institution each year to meet minimum standards and provisions of the commission.

Rule 5.1.7 Each conditional, provisional, or full accreditation granted by the commission shall state specifically what courses or degree programs the institution is authorized to offer, at which location(s), to what specific market (if applicable), and the period for which the accreditation is granted.

Rule 5.1.7.1 Fully accredited institutions must submit status reports to the commission upon request by the commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.2. Institutions seeking to extend provisional accreditation

Rule 5.2.1 Each institution with provisional or conditional accreditation must submit, at minimum, an annual progress report to the commission no later than April 1 on forms provided by the commission. The commission may request more frequent progress reports. Copies of all reports submitted by the institution to any commission-recognized accrediting agencies along with copies of any correspondence received from an accrediting agency regarding formal action taken by that agency must be included and attached to the annual progress report. Other documents, including site visit reports and documents commonly included as part of the accreditation process, must be made available by the institution upon request by the commission.

Rule 5.2.2 The commission may direct the chair and evaluation team to visit the applicant institution, at the expense of the applicant institution.

Rule 5.2.3 The commission shall consider the reports submitted by the institution and the report of the evaluation team.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.3. Institutions seeking to expand education programs and degrees

Rule 5.3.1 An institution with provisional accreditation which seeks to expand its education programs and degrees to be conferred must submit an amendment to its original application or annual progress report giving full documentation. Documentation shall include an outline of the curriculum to be offered for the degree, the qualifications of the faculty to be involved in the program of study, the anticipated enrollment, the financial support for this proposed program, the library resources in support of the proposed program, and the relation of this proposed program to the purpose of the institution.

Rule 5.3.2 An institution that holds full accreditation, which seeks to expand its education programs and degrees to be conferred, must submit written notification to the commission of its intent to apply to the appropriate commission-recognized accrediting agency for program/degree expansion. The commission will provide a letter to the accrediting agency certifying the status of the institution with the commission. The institution shall notify the commission of the final action taken by the accrediting agency regarding the institution's request.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.4 All institutions making other substantive changes

Rule 5.4.1 The institution must inform the commission immediately of any changes in the following areas: ownership, institution name, agents, faculty, programs of study, evaluation methods, job placement service, administrators, financial stability, the loss of financial aid program eligibility.

The commission may request a report that includes a detailed description regarding how the change(s) will affect the institution's compliance with commission standards, regulations, procedures, and policies.

The institution must submit to the commission copies of any reports or correspondence submitted by the institution to any commission-recognized accrediting agencies, along with copies of any correspondence received from the accrediting agencies regarding formal action taken by that agencies.

Rule 5.4.2 Commission accreditation is not transferable. In the event of a change in ownership of an institution, the new owner must apply for state accreditation within thirty (30) days after the change of ownership has occurred

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.5 All institutions that discontinue operations: Upon discontinuance of operation of a state accredited institution, the chief executive officer or other responsible officer must provide to the commission within sixty (60) days: proof of official closing date; last date of instruction (final class date); proof of reason for the closure; proof of method developed to assist students with the completion of their program of study and individual courses (teach-out/transfers); proof of notice sent to all currently enrolled students, notifying them of the closure; proof of notice given to students indicating where they may obtain any of their records; proof of disposition of student records, with a contact person, complete address, and telephone number and instructions on how any student records may be obtained and any fees involved; proof of notice sent to all students who have paid

for any tuition and/or fees for future enrollment in a program of study or individual course informing them of the closure, and refund information.

Rule 5.5.1 The chief executive officer or other responsible official shall have the duty to convey all student records, including financial aid disposition, to a safe place for storage (preferably electronic storage) and shall notify the commission of the storage address and telephone number, any changes in storage location, and applicable fees to obtain such records.

Rule 5.5.2 The records of students shall be available for reproduction as requested by students.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.6. Institutions in violation of standards, regulations, policies and procedures

Rule 5.6.1 Accreditation may be refused, revoked, or suspended for proof of violation of the standards, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Rule 5.6.2 The commission shall take whatever action against colleges and universities it deems appropriate for violation of standards, regulations, policies, and procedures by the institutions. Such action may include, but not be limited to, deleting the name of the institution from the approved list; listing of the refusal, revocation or suspension of accreditation of the particular institution; the seeking of injunctive relief against the operation of the institution; and the initiation of any other sanctions provided by law.

Rule 5.6.3 Prior to the denial or withdrawal of any accreditation, the commission shall serve notice thereof on the applicant by registered mail to the institution's last known address, together with a statement of the reasons for its actions.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.7. Formation of commission-appointed evaluation teams

Rule 5.7.1 A commission-appointed evaluation team may make an initial visit to an applicant institution and shall visit the institution along with any Commission-recognized accrediting agency during each of its site visits to the institution. Evaluation team visits shall be at the expense of the institution.

Rule 5.7.2 The size of the commission-appointed evaluation team shall be determined in relation to the nature, size and complexity of the institution being visited.

Rule 5.7.3 Each commission-appointed evaluation team shall be accompanied by the chair of the Commission or his/her designee who shall serve as the chair of the evaluation team.

Rule 5.7.4 All travel costs and expenses related to scheduled visits shall be paid by the institution.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Rule 5.8 Appeal of a commission decision

Rule 5.8.1 An institution must notify the commission in writing within two (2) weeks after receiving notice of denial or withdrawal of any accreditation that it wishes a hearing to appeal the decision. The institution must also notify the commission at that time if it plans to have legal counsel present at the hearing.

Rule 5.8.2 The commission must schedule a hearing within sixty (60) days after receipt of notification from an institution that it seeks an appeal.

Rule 5.8.3 The commission will notify the institution of its decision following the hearing.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241 (1972, as amended).*

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 202: Availability of Information

Part 202 Chapter 1: Availability of Information

Rule 1.1 Availability of Information.

A. Information concerning the following is available on the commission's website www.mississippi.edu/mcca within the Authority and Standards document: commission purpose, composition, term of office (Authority of the Commission); meeting information (Meetings of the Commission), commission decision appeal instructions (Procedures);

B. Pursuant to the Mississippi Public Records Acts of 1983 (the "Act"), effective from and after July 1, 1983, the commission hereby adopts the following regulations and procedures with respect to such public records as may be in its possession. Such rules and procedures are applicable to and shall govern the right to inspect, copy, or reproduce or obtain a reproduction of any public records in the possession of the commission.

(a) Any person wishing to inspect or copy public records must make the request in writing to the commission and must clearly identify the specific information sought. All requests should be dated and include the name of requester, address of the requestor, and current contact information for the requestor. Any response by the commission for a request for access to records will be forwarded to the requesting party within seven (7) working days of the receipt of such request. If the commission is unable to produce the requested record within seven working days after the request is made, the commission shall provide a written explanation to requestor(s) stating that the record will be produced and specifying with particularity why the record(s) cannot be produced within the seven-day period. Absent a mutual agreement between the parties, in no event shall the date for the commission's production of requested records be any later than fourteen (14) working days from receipt by the commission of the original request.

(b) Denial by the commission of a request for access to or copies of public records shall be in writing and shall contain a statement of the specific exemption relied upon by the commission for the denial. A file of all denials of requests for public records will be maintained by the commission for a period of no less than three (3) years from the date such denials are made.

(c) Recipient(s) will be assisted by a staff member at a charge not to exceed actual costs. Actual costs for search, review and/or possible redaction of information by a staff member will be based upon the hourly rate of compensation for the lowest paid agency employee qualified to perform the task and multiplied by the actual time utilized to complete the task. Recipient(s) will be charged fifteen cents per page for standard black and white photocopies. For all nonstandard photocopies, actual costs of reproduction will be assessed to recipient(s). Records will be

available for inspection and copying by appointment during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, holidays excluded.

(d) Recipient(s) will deposit cash, check or money order in escrow with the staff prior to receiving material. This estimated amount must be sufficient to cover the estimated cost of the staff member's assistance, copying fees, mailing fees, and/or any associated reproduction fees. Recipient(s) desiring information by mail will be charged actual mailing costs in addition to those costs set forth in subsection (c).

(e) Adequate space to inspect requested documents will be provided at no cost, if available. Recipient(s) will be provided requested documents by a staff member but no more than one recipient at a time.

(f) All written requests must be submitted to:

Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Source: *Miss. Code Ann., § 25-61-1 - 17, as amended.*

Part 202 Chapter 2: Oral Proceeding

Rule 2.1 Request for Oral Proceeding. When a political subdivision, an agency, or ten (10) citizens request(s) an oral proceeding in regards to a proposed rule adoption, the requestor must submit a printed, typewritten, or legibly handwritten request. Each request must include the full name, telephone numbers, physical and mailing address(es) of the requestor(s). All requests shall be signed by the person submitting the request, unless represented by an attorney, in which case the attorney may sign the request.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann § 25-43-105 (Rev. 2006).*

Rule 2.2 Notice of Oral Proceeding. Notice of the date, time, and place of all oral proceedings shall be filed with the Secretary of State's Office for publication in the Administrative Bulletin. The commission will provide notice of oral proceedings to each requestor. The oral proceedings will be scheduled no earlier than twenty (20) days from the filing of the notice with the Secretary of State. The chair, or his/her designee who is familiar with the substance of the proposed rule, will preside at the oral proceeding on a proposed rule.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann § 25-43-105 (Rev. 2006).*

Rule 2.3 Public Participation Guidelines. Public participation will be permitted at oral proceedings in accordance with the following:

A. At an oral proceeding on a proposed rule, persons may make statements and present documentary and physical submissions concerning the proposed rule.

B. Persons wishing to make oral presentations at such a proceeding shall notify the commission at least five business days prior to the proceeding and indicate the general subject of their presentations.

C. At the proceeding, those who participate shall indicate their names and addresses, indentify any persons or organizations they may represent, and provide any other information relating to their participation deemed appropriate by the presiding officer.

D. The presiding officer may place time limitations on individual presentations when necessary to assure the orderly and expeditious conduct of the oral proceeding. To encourage joint presentations and to avoid repetition, additional time may be provided for persons whose presentations represent the views of other individuals as well as their own views.

E. Persons making presentations are encouraged to avoid restating matters that have already been submitted in writing. Written materials may, however, be submitted at the oral proceeding.

F. Where time permits and to facilitate the exchange of information, the presiding officer may open the floor to questions or general discussion. The presiding officer may question participants and permit the questioning of participants by other participants about any matter relating to that rule-making proceeding, including any prior written submissions made by those participants in that proceeding. No participant shall be required to answer any question.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006)

Rule 2.4 Submissions and Records. Physical and Documentary Submissions presented by participants in an oral proceeding shall be submitted to the presiding officer. Such submissions become the property of the commission, part of the rulemaking record, and are subject to the commission's public records request procedure. The commission may record oral proceedings by stenographic or electronic means.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Part 202 Chapter 3: Declaratory Opinions

Rule 3.1 Application of Chapter. This chapter sets forth the commission's rules governing the form, content, and filing of requests for declaratory opinions, the procedural rights of persons in relation to the written requests, and the commission's procedures regarding the disposition of requests as required by Mississippi Code § 25-43-2.103.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.2 Scope of Declaratory Opinions. The commission will issue declaratory opinions regarding the applicability to specified facts of:

A. a statute administered or enforceable by the commission,

B. a rule promulgated by the commission, or an order issued by the commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.3 Scope of Declaratory Opinion Request. A request must be limited to a single transaction or occurrence.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.4 How to Submit Requests. When a person with substantial interest, as required by Section 25-43-2.103 of the Administrative Procedures Act, requests a declaratory opinion, the requestor must submit a printed, typewritten, or legibly handwritten request.

A. Each request must be submitted on 8-1/2" x 11" white paper.

B. The request may be in the form of a letter addressed to the commission or in the form of a pleading as if filed with a court.

C. Each request must include the full name, telephone numbers, and mailing address of the requestor(s).

D. All requests shall be signed by the person filing the request, unless represented by an attorney, in which case the attorney may sign the request.

E. Each request must clearly state that it is a request for a declaratory opinion.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.5 Signature Attestation. Any party who signs the request shall attest that the request complies with the requirements set forth in these rules, including but not limited to a full, complete, and accurate statement of relevant facts and that there are no related proceedings pending before any agency, administrative, or judicial tribunal.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.6 Request Content Requirement. Each request must contain the following:

A. A clear identification of the statute, rule, or order at issue;

B. The question for the declaratory opinion;

C. A clear and concise statement of all facts relevant to the question presented;

D. The identity of all other known persons involved in or impacted by the facts giving rise to the request including their relationship to the facts, and their name, mailing address, and telephone number; and

E. A statement sufficient to show that the requestor has a substantial interest in the subject matter of the request.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.7 Reasons for Refusal of Declaratory Opinion Request. The commission may, for good cause, refuse to issue a declaratory opinion. The circumstances in which declaratory opinions will not be issued include, but are not necessarily limited to:

A. The matter is outside the primary jurisdiction of the commission;

B. Lack of clarity concerning the question presented;

C. There is pending or anticipated litigation, administrative action or anticipated administrative action, or other adjudication which may either answer the question presented by the request or otherwise make an answer unnecessary;

D. The statute, rule, or order on which a declaratory opinion is sought is clear and not in need of interpretation to answer the question presented by the request;

E. The facts presented in the request are not sufficient to answer the question presented;

F. The request fails to contain information required by these rules or the requestor failed to follow the procedure set forth in these rules;

G. The request seeks to resolve issues which have become moot or are abstract or hypothetical such that the requestor is not substantially affected by the rule, statute, or order on which a declaratory opinion is sought;

H. No controversy exists or is certain to arise which raises a question concerning the application of the statute, rule, or order;

I. The question presented by the request concerns the legal validity of a statute, rule, or order;

J. The request is not based upon facts calculated to aid in the planning of future conduct, but is, instead, based on past conduct in an effort to establish the effect of that conduct;

K. No clear answer is determinable;

L. The question presented by the request involves the application of a criminal statute or sets forth facts which may constitute a crime;

M. The answer to the question presented would require the disclosure of information which is privileged or otherwise protected by law from disclosure;

N. The question is currently the subject of an Attorney General's opinion request;

O. The question has been answered by an Attorney General's opinion;

P. One or more requestors have standing to seek an Attorney General's opinion on the proffered question;

Q. A similar request is pending before the commission, or any other agency, or a proceeding is pending on the same subject matter before any agency, administrative or judicial tribunal, or where such an opinion would constitute the unauthorized practice of law; or

R. The question involves eligibility for a license, permit, certificate or other approval by the commission or some other agency and there is a statutory or regulatory application process by which eligibility for said license, permit, or certificate or other approval may be determined.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.8 Agency Response. Within forty-five (45) days after the receipt of a request for a declaratory opinion which complies with the requirements of these rules, the commission will, in writing:

A. Issue an opinion declaring the applicability of the statute, rule, or order to the specified circumstances;

B. Agree to issue a declaratory opinion by a specified time but no later than ninety (90) days after receipt of the written request; or

C. Decline to issue a declaratory opinion, stating the reasons for its action.

The forty-five (45) day period shall begin on the first business day after which the request is received by the commission.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.103 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.9 Finality of Declaratory Opinions. A declaratory opinion shall not become final until the expiration of sixty (60) days after the issuance of the opinion. Prior to the expiration of sixty (60) days, the commission may, in its discretion, withdraw or amend the declaratory opinion for any reason which is not arbitrary or capricious. Reasons for withdrawing or amending an

opinion include, but are not limited to, a determination that the request failed to meet the requirements of these rules or that the opinion issued contains a legal or factual error.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.105 (Rev. 2006).

Rule 3.10 Availability of Declaratory Opinions and Requests for Opinions. Declaratory opinions and requests for declaratory opinions shall be available for public inspection and copying at the expense of the viewer during normal business hours. All declaratory opinions and requests shall be indexed by name, subject, and date of issue. Declaratory opinions and requests that contain information that is confidential or exempt from disclosure under the Mississippi Public Records Act or other laws shall be exempt from this requirement and shall remain confidential.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 25-43-2.103 (Rev. 2006).