

Sample ABHE Accreditation Plan

In accordance with Title 5, California Code of Regulations (5, CCR) section 71105.5, **[Institution Name]** presents its Accreditation Plan to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.

[Institution Name]

5, CCR section 71105(b)(1): **[Institution Name]** has identified The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) as its accreditation agency.

5, CCR section 71105(b)(2): ABHE Accreditor Eligibility Criteria

ABHE Accreditation Eligibility Requirements:

a) Institutional Eligibility

In addition to fulfilling additional requirements, in order for a postsecondary institution to apply for accreditation by the Commission and to remain accredited, it must be in compliance with the following Conditions of Eligibility:

- 1.) Authorization. An institution must document authorization from the appropriate governmental agency (if required) to operate as an educational institution and to grant all degrees, certificates, and diplomas that it awards.
- 2.) Institutional mission. An institution must have a clear statement of mission as well as formally adopted and widely publicized institutional goals that are in accord with the Association's definition of biblical higher education.
- 3.) Governance. An institution must have an external governing board of at least five members that has the authority to oversee the accomplishment of the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution.
- 4.) Chief executive officer. An institution must employ a chief executive officer whose major responsibility is to the institution and who possesses appropriate authority.
- 5.) Catalog. An institution must have available to students and the public a current and accurate catalog setting forth the institution's governance, mission, institutional goals, specific objectives, academic program requirements and courses, learning and educational resources, admissions policies and standards, rules and regulations for conduct, full- and part-time faculty rosters with faculty degrees, fees and other charges, refund policies, a policy defining satisfactory academic progress, and other items related to attending, transferring to, or withdrawing from the institution. Claims regarding educational effectiveness must be supported by appropriate data.
- 6.) Assessment and public accountability. An institution must make information available to the public concerning student achievement and institutional performance outcomes, including graduation rates and rate of recent graduate employment in program related occupations.
- 7.) Learning resources. An institution must ensure access to resources necessary to support courses, programs, and degrees offered.
- 8.) Faculty qualifications. An institution must have qualified academic leadership and at least one qualified faculty member for each major or program offered. The oversight of the program may be by the same individual as the faculty member.

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Eligibility Requirements Continued:

- 9.) Academic programs. An institution must offer one or more educational programs that are at least two academic years in length and are consistent with the mission of the institution and appropriate to higher education.
- 10.) Biblical/theological studies. An institution must meet, in all its programs, the minimum requirement for biblical/theological studies as specified in the Standards for Accreditation.
- 11.) General studies. An institution must meet, in all its programs, the minimum requirement for general studies as specified in the Standards for Accreditation.
- 12.) Ministry formation program. An institution must require that undergraduate students participate in a program of ministry formation.
- 13.) Student body. An institution must have students enrolled in and pursuing its educational programs.
- 14.) Program completion. An institution must have graduated at least one class in its principal program by the time of the committee's decision regarding applicant status.
- 15.) Admissions policy. An institution must have an admissions policy that is compatible with its stated institutional mission and programs offered.
- 16.) Institutional stability and capacity. An institution must demonstrate a pattern of stability in enrollment, governing board, administration, faculty, and finances, and the capacity for development into an accredited institution within ten years.
- 17.) Financial base. An institution must have a financial base indicating that the institution can achieve its mission and goals within a balanced budget and at a safe level of debt.
- 18.) Income allocation. An institution must devote a substantial and sufficient portion of its generated income to the support of its educational purposes and programs.
- 19.) Annual audit. An institution must have financial records that receive an annual, independent, opinioned audit.
- 20.) Agency disclosure. An institution must agree to disclose to the association any and all such information as it may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

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Eligibility Requirements Continued:

- 21.) Compliance. An institution must commit itself to comply with the Association's Standards for Accreditation, either current or as hereafter modified, during the period of its affiliation.
- 22.) Public disclosure. An institution must attest in writing that it understands and agrees that the Association may, at its discretion, make known to any agency or member of the public the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Association.

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5, CCR section 71105(b)(3): ABHE Minimum Requirements for Institutional Accreditation

Where review for candidate status looks at whether or not the institution shows promise of substantial compliance with all Standards and Essential Elements, the review for initial accreditation carries the expectation that substantial compliance will be fully achieved by the time of this review. The Commission on Accreditation Manual is a complete record of ABHE Standards for Accreditation, policies and procedures; the Standards and Essential Elements can be referenced here.

5, CCR section 71105(b)(4) (A-D): An outline of the process and timeline whereby the institution will achieve full accreditation within five years of provisional approval:

1.) Contact Commission Office

An institution desiring applicant status with the COA should contact the Commission office to schedule a one-day consultation visit by a member of the Commission's professional staff to the institution's campus.

2.) One-Day Consultation Visit

This preliminary consultation visit is required and must be completed during the 24 months prior to submission of an application. The purpose of the visit is to assist the institution in understanding the accreditation process and conduct a preliminary assessment of the institution's achievement of the Conditions of Eligibility.

3.) Application Submitted (includes all of the following):

1. A completed ABHE application form.
2. An official letter from the chief executive officer stating the board of control's desire for the institution to pursue accreditation with the Commission.
3. An official statement from the chief executive officer reflecting a board of control decision to affirm support of the ABHE Tenets of Faith.
4. A document demonstrating compliance with the Conditions of Eligibility. The document should describe the institution's compliance with each requirement and provide documentation of compliance in appendices at the end of the narrative.
5. A check for the application fee should be sent by postal mail when the application is submitted.

4.) Application Status Granted

The Commission considers applications on a rolling basis as follows:

December 15 deadline for February Commission review, May 15 deadline for June review, September 15 deadline for November Commission review.

The Commission's Committee on Applicant and Candidate Status (APCAN) will review these materials, and the COA will determine whether to grant or deny applicant status or defer action. An institution must substantially meet the Conditions of Eligibility and evidence the potential to achieve candidate status within a maximum of five years to be granted applicant status. An institution denied applicant status must wait one year before reapplying.

NOTE: ABHE's acceptance of the institution into applicant status (in addition to acceptance of the required application fee) meets BPPE's requirement for achieving pre-accreditation or accreditation candidacy as defined by 5, CCR section 70000(s).

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5.) Document Timely Progress toward Candidate Status

Once granted applicant status, an institution must annually demonstrate timely progress toward candidate status. To support this expectation, an annual consultation visit by a member of the COA professional staff is required. The institution must also complete an online annual report and submit an annual progress report, financial audit, and academic catalog(s) for review by the COA.

6.) Self-Study Submitted

In November of the third year of applicant status, the institution prepares and submits a self-study for review by the COA. This rigorous self-analysis consists of (1) a compliance document (normally not exceeding 100 pp. text plus exhibits) analyzing and documenting the extent to which the institution meets the Standards and Essential Elements; (2) an assessment plan describing systematic and ongoing assessment processes to evaluate student learning and institutional effectiveness; (3) a planning document showing how the institution plans to address weaknesses or take action to advance quality performance outcomes and/or meet ABHE Standards; and (4) a brief statistical abstract overviewing the most recent four-year trend in enrollment, library, finances, and other data. The COA reviews the self-study at the following February meeting.

7.) Evaluation Visit

An evaluation team will verify claims made in the institution's self-study materials, formulate recommendations relative to the institution's achievement of the Standards for Accreditation, assess whether the institution has in place a mechanism for ongoing development, and prepare a recommendation for the COA regarding the institution's readiness for advancement to candidate status.

8.) COA's Decision

Institution representatives will be given an opportunity to appear before the COA as it considers the evaluation team report and the institution's response to the team report and determines whether to grant or deny candidate status or defer action. The COA's decision is based upon whether the institution appears able to achieve accredited status within a maximum of five years.

An institution denied candidate status must wait one year before seeking reinstatement to applicant or candidate status. If desired, it may appeal the decision in accord with the Policy and Procedures for Reviews and Appeals. An institution may voluntarily withdraw its request for candidate status, without prejudice, at any time prior to the decision of the COA.

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9.) Candidate Status

A candidate institution must demonstrate progress in moving toward accredited status. An annual one-day visit by a member of the COA professional staff is required in any year in which the institution does not host a visiting team. The COA staff representative will analyze the institution with respect to the Standards for Accreditation and advise the institution concerning organization for self-study, assessment, and institutional planning. APCAN will annually review the institution's progress report, the staff representative's report, the institution's financial audit report for the recently completed fiscal year, and data from its completed online annual report. The committee will make a report to the COA, which is responsible for making a determination whether sufficient progress is being made as would warrant the continuation of candidate status. Continued candidacy is contingent upon submission to the COA of all required reports and timely payment of annual Association and COA dues and applicable fees. In extenuating circumstances, a grace period of up to six months may be requested. Institutional representatives are expected to participate annually in one of the COA's self-study seminars.

10.) Advancing to Accredited Status

A candidate institution will conduct an institutional self-study with respect to its own mission and objectives and with respect to the Standards for Accreditation. A final report, in the form of a compliance document, of the institution's self-study (normally not exceeding 100 pages), together with an institutional assessment plan and planning document, is to be submitted to coa@abhe.org no later than November 15 prior to an evaluation team visit scheduled for the fall of the institution's fourth year of candidate status.

An institution making significant progress may request to accelerate the timeline and submit self-study documents early for review. In such instances, the institution must submit a written request to accelerate the process to accredited status to APCAN at least one committee meeting prior to submission of the self-study. The due date for self-studies is November 15; therefore, the request to accelerate must be received by May 15. The request must be accompanied by a progress report addressing the institution's resolution of any prior concerns noted in action letters and the institution's readiness to demonstrate satisfaction of all Institutional Accreditation Standards. The decision concerning acceleration will be informed by the institution's past compliance with reporting deadlines, the number and seriousness of concerns communicated in prior action letters, and how well the institution has addressed prior concerns in its progress reports.

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An evaluation team will verify claims made in the institution's self-study materials, formulate recommendations relative to the institution's achievement of the Standards for Accreditation, assess whether the institution has in place a mechanism for ongoing development, and prepare a recommendation for the COA regarding the institution's readiness for advancement to accredited status.

Institution representatives will be given an opportunity to appear before the COA as it considers the evaluation team report and the institution's response to the team report and determine whether to grant or deny initial accreditation or defer action. The COA's decision is based upon the Principle for Accreditation, i.e., that an institution is substantially achieving and can be reasonably expected to continue to achieve its own mission and objectives and the Standards for Accreditation, and that it is committed to ongoing institutional development.

INITIAL ABHE ACCREDITATION TIMELINE

This timeline does not reflect the result of any deferral or acceleration during the process. In addition, by November 15 of each year, an online annual report must be completed and a financial audit and academic catalog submitted (electronically) through the ABHE Commission on Accreditation Portal (www.abhecoa.org)

PRE-APPLICANT:

2018 Summer/Fall 1-day preliminary visit to campus by a Commission staff representative to review the Conditions of Eligibility and assess the institution's readiness for the accreditation process

Dec. 15 Application and supporting documents submitted to coa@abhe.org

2019 Feb. Commission decision on applicant status (if approved continue timeline, if not, defer 1 year to restart)

APPLICANT:

2019 May/June New Applicant Orientation at ABHE headquarters in Orlando, followed by 1-day staff visit prior to submission of the first year progress report

Nov. 15 First year applicant progress report due

2020 Feb. Commission reviews progress, makes recommendations to be addressed in the next progress report

Spring-Fall 1-day campus visit by a Commission staff representative

Nov. 15 Second year applicant progress report due

2021 Feb. Commission reviews progress, makes recommendations for next report

Spring-Fall 1-day campus visit by a Commission staff representative

Nov. 15 Self-study for candidate status review due

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2022 Feb. Commission reviews self-study, approves team visit*
Spring-Sum. Update self-study due 8 weeks prior to evaluation team visit
Fall 3-day comprehensive evaluation team visit to campus
Late Fall Response to team visit report due 6 weeks after report is received

2023 Feb. Commission decision on candidate status* (institutional representatives appear before Commission at Feb. meeting)

CANDIDATE:

2023 Spring-Fall 1-day campus visit by a Commission staff representative
Nov. 15 First year candidate progress report due

2024 Feb. Commission reviews progress, makes recommendations for next report
Spring-Fall 1-day campus visit by a Commission staff representative
Nov. 15 Second year candidate progress report due

2025 Feb. Commission reviews progress, makes recommendations for next report
Spring-Fall 1-day campus visit by a Commission staff representative
Nov. 15 Self-study for initial accreditation review due

2026 Feb. Commission reviews self-study, approves team visit*
Spring-Sum. Update self-study due 8 weeks prior to evaluation team visit
Fall 3-day comprehensive evaluation team visit to campus
Late Fall Response to team visit report due 6 weeks after report is received

2027 Feb. Commission decision on initial accreditation status* (institutional representatives appear before Commission at Feb. meeting)

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

New applicant institutions are expected to send one or more representatives to the two-day New Applicant Orientation held at the ABHE office in the institution's first year of applicant status (usually May/June). The workshop provides guidance on satisfying the Standards for Accreditation and the Essential Elements within each standard. Institutions will conduct a self-assessment of compliance with the standards/essential elements as part of the worksho

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Tasks	May 2018	June - Nov. 2018	Dec. 2018	Feb. 2019	May 2019- Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021	Feb.- Nov. 2022	Feb. 2023	Mar. 2023-	Nov. 2025	Sept. -Dec. 2026	Feb. 2027
Contact Commission Office	x											
One-Day Consultation Visit		x										
Application Submitted			x									
Applicant Status Granted				x								
Document Timely Progress toward Candidate Status					x							
Submit Self-Study						x						
Evaluation Visit							x					
Candidate Status Granted								x				
Documentation of Progress toward Accredited Status									x			
Second Self- Study Submitted										x		
Hosted Visit for Initial Accreditation											x	
Accreditation Granted												x

Note: This is a sample accreditation plan. The requirements and dates for each individual plan will vary by institution.

***Note:** “Pre-accreditation” or Accreditation “Candidacy” as used in sections 94885.1 and 94885.5 of the Code means that an institution has submitted a completed application for initial accreditation with the required fee, which was accepted by the accreditor.