

Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background	1
Mission and Objectives of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership	3
Preamble to the Accreditation Standards	3
Accreditation Preconditions	4
Mission Standards	6
Faculty Standards	7
Curriculum Standards	9
Resource Standards	10
Instructional Standards	11
Student Standards	12
Accreditation Processes	13
Accreditation Fees	13
Membership Requirements and Fees	14

Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Accreditation Standards

Introduction and Background

In 1997, the Board of Directors of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership recognized the need for a process to recognize and accredit high quality leadership education programs. The Board applauded the fact that leadership programs are growing in institutions of higher education, but it was concerned that potential leadership students might not be able to identify high quality programs. The Board appointed a Task Force to investigate the situation and to make recommendations of actions which the Academy might take to encourage the development of high quality leadership education programs and to provide students and other interested parties information about the relative quality of leadership programs.

The Task Force reported that no body exists which recognizes, evaluates or accredits leadership education programs. The Task Force recommended that the Academy undertake that role, establish accreditation standards for leadership programs, offer institutional memberships in the Academy to universities interested in learning about accreditation, organize accreditation teams, and certify high quality leadership programs with recognition as an Accredited Leadership Program under the auspices of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership.

The Board adopted the recommendations of the Task Force and has established Accreditation Standards. Those standards deal with the Mission, Faculty, Curriculum, Resources, Instruction, and Students involved in a program of leadership education. Those universities offering programs which meet the minimum standards outlined by the Board will be afforded recognition by the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership as offering an Accredited Leadership Program.

The Board was guided in its development of accreditation standards and its design of the accreditation process by a philosophy of accreditation. That philosophy is as follows:

Accreditation of a degree program in leadership should be linked to the mission of the program, the department, school or college in which it is housed, and the university which offers the degree.

Accreditation standards should challenge all schools to engage in continuing program enhancement in leadership education.

Accreditation should emphasize the educational and professional value which a leadership program affords to its students and graduates.

There should be flexibility in accreditation which affords access to accreditation for a broad range of missions, departments, schools or colleges and universities.

The accreditation process should be structured to provide a favorable cost/benefit relationship for programs, departments, schools or colleges and universities.

Accreditation standards should be sufficiently rigorous as to ensure that only high quality programs will qualify for accreditation.

The process should provide for review at appropriate intervals to ensure that accredited programs continue to offer a high quality leadership education.

The accreditation process should recognize and encourage innovation and experimentation, growth and diversity in leadership education.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership is now pleased to present its Accreditation Standards and to offer membership to institutions interested in achieving accreditation. The Academy will examine leadership programs and will offer accreditation to programs which meet its standards for quality in leadership education. Institutions offering leadership programs which meet the Academy's standards will be certified by the Academy as Accredited Leadership Program providers. This accreditation will extend for a period of six (6) years. Review of an accredited program to ensure that it continues to maintain high quality and to meet the standards of the Academy will result in accreditation for an additional period of six (6) years.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Accreditation Standards

Mission and Objectives of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership

The Academy exists to support and encourage high quality, innovative, leadership education throughout the world. It encourages and supports the development, advancement and dissemination of knowledge in leadership and leadership education. It provides standards for peer review of leadership education programs and recognizes high quality programs through accreditation.

Preamble to the Accreditation Standards

In every organization, agency, institution, association, company, group, establishment, academy, or society in the world, the key to progress, growth and success in the highly complex, modern environment is leadership. For every individual regardless of occupation, profession, career, avocation, or calling, the key to individual success and personal growth is leadership.

Leadership education must prepare students to lead in their organizations and in the larger society, and to grow personally and professionally throughout their lives.

Accreditation focuses on the quality of leadership education and sets standards which establish challenging thresholds for certification which support programs, departments, schools, colleges and universities in the continuing enhancement of leadership education.

The Academy supports and encourages innovation, experimentation and diversity in leadership education programs. Accordingly, the accreditation process focuses on an institution's clear determination of the mission of the leadership program, the institutional support which it provides for the program, the quality and continuing professional development of the faculty involved in the program, the curriculum, and quality of instruction in the program, and the performance of students and graduates of the program.

The Academy recognizes that high quality leadership education programs engage in continuing enhancement. Accordingly, the accreditation process will emphasize preparation for the future by examining processes in place to monitor and improve the quality of the program.

To be accredited, a leadership education program must meet certain standards. This document describes standards established by the Academy for accreditation.

The accreditation process for a leadership education program is implemented by an examination of a self study of the program and a visit to the institution by a team representing the Academy. The accreditation team will review the self study report prior to their visit, physically examine

program aspects which they deem appropriate, and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors as to the worthiness of the program for accreditation.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Accreditation Preconditions

In order to be eligible for accreditation review of a leadership degree program, an institution must meet several preconditions. These conditions are as follow.

Precondition 1

The institution must be authorized to grant baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees by a recognized agency. The institution must have specific policies that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin in the admission and retention of students and in the conditions of employment of faculty and staff.

Precondition 2

The institution must be accredited by a recognized institutional accrediting body. It must be in compliance with the accreditation standards of that body during the year of internal program review, the year of the accreditation visit, and the year of accreditation by this Academy. Subsequent to accreditation by this Academy, the institution must demonstrate continuing adherence to the standards of the institutional accrediting body.

Precondition 3

The institution must grant a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral level degree in leadership or which features a major or concentration in leadership. If an institution offers degrees at more than one level, the accreditation process will review all levels simultaneously. Subsequent to accreditation by this Academy, if an institution initiates a program at a new level, all programs must be reviewed within five years of the initiation.

Precondition 4

The degree program(s) to be accredited must have been in existence for a sufficient period of time to make possible an evaluation of quality. The institution should be able to produce information concerning graduates and their placement, and evidence of processes for curriculum development, and faculty development and evaluation.

Precondition 5

The leadership program offered by the institution must be supported by an administrative unit to which full time faculty appointments are made. The administrative unit must be sustained by a continuing budget. Subsequent to accreditation by this Academy, the institution must demonstrate continuing support for the administrative unit.

Precondition 6

If an institution offers degree programs in leadership at multiple locations, or through multiple media, including electronic media, all locations and all media will be reviewed in the accreditation process simultaneously. The institution must demonstrate comparative quality of leadership education at all locations and through all media. Subsequent to accreditation by this Academy, if an institution initiates a program at a new location, or through a new media, all programs must be reviewed within five years of the initiation.

Precondition 7

If an institution permits transfer of credit from other institutions, the credit transfers must be subject to normal faculty review and validation. Transfers of credit must not play a significant role in the leadership program.

Precondition 8

The institution to be accredited must be a member of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership and its leadership program(s) must be in compliance with accreditation standards published by the Academy during the year of program review, the year of the accreditation visit, and the year of accreditation. Subsequent to accreditation by this Academy, the institution must demonstrate continuing adherence to the standards of the Academy.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Accreditation Standards

Mission Standards

A mission being a concrete expression of the philosophy of an institution and a guide for its activities, a high quality leadership education program should begin with a mission. In order to be accredited, an institution must articulate a mission for its leadership program(s) which establishes its view of the future and of leadership education. The mission must meet the following standards.

Mission Standard 1

The mission statement must be clear, must be published to the faculty, students and interested parties, and must be subject to periodic review and revision. The mission must be appropriate to the institution and must establish a vision of a high quality degree program in leadership education.

Mission Standard 2

The mission, either through the mission statement or its supporting documentation, must specify the educational objectives of each leadership degree program offered and identify the characteristics of students and other constituents served by the program.

Mission Standard 3

The mission, either through the mission statement or its supporting documentation, must specify the relative emphasis upon teaching, intellectual contributions and service which the institution expects of the faculty involved in the leadership degree program(s).

Mission Standard 4

The activities of the institution and the leadership administrative unit must be consistent with the mission statement, in the judgment of the accrediting visitation team.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Accreditation Standards

Faculty Standards

The composition and qualifications of the faculty are essential to the creation and delivery of high quality leadership education. The institution must demonstrate that it recruits, develops and maintains a high quality faculty in its leadership program(s). In order to be accredited, an institution must meet the following faculty standards.

Faculty Standard 1

At least 80% of the student credit hours required for the leadership degree program must be taught or administered by professionally qualified faculty. Institutions which offer masters or doctoral level leadership degree programs should have greater concentrations of professionally qualified faculty.

Faculty Standard 2

Professional qualification requires a minimum of a master's degree from an institution accredited by a recognized institutional accrediting body. The educational preparation of the faculty should be supplemented by professional experience relevant to leadership education, significant in duration, and current at the time of hiring. Faculty may demonstrate professional qualification through intellectual activities including a demonstrated record in leadership research within five years of the accreditation visit.

Faculty Standard 3

Faculty must demonstrate continuing efforts to enhance professional qualifications and to advance the leadership discipline. These efforts should include participation in professional meetings or conferences, peer reviewed intellectual contributions in leadership, professional involvement in the form of consulting activities, leadership positions in professional organizations, faculty internships, or other activities which a visiting team determines appropriate to meet this standard.

Faculty Standard 4

The institution must have a formal, periodic review process for supporting reappointment, promotion and tenure decisions. At a minimum, this process must consider effective teaching, educational and instructional innovations, and professional and intellectual contributions.

Faculty Standard 5

At least 80% of the faculty supporting the leadership degree program must be full time faculty members. Institutions offering masters or doctoral level leadership degree programs should have higher proportions of full time faculty.

Faculty Standard 6

Teaching loads should be consistent with the mission and should be balanced to support high quality teaching, faculty development, professional and intellectual contributions, and service in proportions established by the mission.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Curriculum Standards

The leadership education curriculum is central to a high quality degree program in leadership. The institution must demonstrate that it offers and maintains a high quality leadership curriculum. In order to be accredited, an institution must meet the following curriculum standards.

Curriculum Standard 1

The curriculum must be in consonance with the mission and it should reflect the state of the art of leadership education.

Curriculum Standard 2

The leadership curriculum must have a foundation which develops the skills and abilities necessary to support the life long personal development of graduates.

Curriculum Standard 3

The institution must demonstrate a process for curriculum evaluation and review, modification and growth. This process should emphasize experimentation and innovation in curriculum development.

Curriculum Standard 4

The institution should have a transfer credit evaluation system in place which ensures that course credit granted from other institutions is equivalent in quality to that offered by the institution itself.

Curriculum Standard 5

As a minimum, fifty percent of the credit hours required for granting the leadership degree must be earned at the institution itself. If an institution offers master's or doctoral level leadership degrees, at least fifty percent of the credit hours required for granting the degree must be in courses reserved for graduate students.

Curriculum Standard 6

The institution must demonstrate a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. This process should include an assessment of the placement of graduates and their subsequent performance.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Resource Standards

The instructional resources available to support the leadership education program are critical to the delivery of high quality leadership education. These resources must be adequate to achieve the mission and must be of high quality. In order to be accredited, an institution must meet the following resource standards.

Resource Standard 1

Library and/or reference materials must be adequate to support the degree program(s) offered, must be accessible to students and faculty, and must be sufficient to support the mission. The Academy recognizes that a wide variety of means may be appropriate to a given circumstance. Consequently, student and faculty access is the key factor in meeting this standard.

Resource Standard 2

Information technology and computing resources must be adequate to support the degree program(s) offered, must be accessible to students and faculty, and must be sufficient to support the mission. The program should be designed to encourage use of these technologies by both faculty and students.

Resource Standard 3

Instructional technology, classroom and/or meeting facilities, and instructional support materials must be adequate to support the degree program(s) offered, must be accessible to students and faculty, and must be sufficient to support the mission.

Resource Standard 4

The institution should support and encourage faculty participation in academic and professional organizations, and professional development, and professional and intellectual contributions. This support must be adequate to achieve the mission.

Resource Standard 5

Staff and administrative support is crucial to the effective employment of faculty and enhancement of instructional resources. Consequently, administrative and staff support and philosophy must be adequate to support the degree program(s) offered, must display a commitment to leadership education, and must be sufficient to support the mission.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Instructional Standards

In order to ensure the effective creation and delivery of instruction, and demonstrate continuing program enhancement, an institution must be innovative and future oriented. In order to be accredited, an institution must meet the following instructional standards.

Instructional Standard 1

Processes must exist for the review and evaluation of instructional effectiveness. At a minimum, these processes must monitor curriculum delivery and coordinate interdisciplinary instruction.

Instructional Standard 2

Outcome assessments must be established and functioning which consider learning outcomes, student achievement, placement, and performance of graduates.

Instructional Standard 3

Processes must exist to evaluate faculty performance and teaching effectiveness, and the use of instructional resources.

Instructional Standard 4

A program must show evidence of innovation and experimentation in teaching, instructional delivery, curriculum content, and leadership education in general. The Academy recognizes that innovation does not always lead to success, but the lack of innovation ensures stagnation and failure.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership
Accreditation Standards

Student Standards

A high quality student body is important for effective leadership education. Accordingly, an institution should recruit, retain, and graduate qualified students as defined by the mission. In order to be accredited an institution must meet the following student standards.

Student Standard 1

An institution must have clear, written guidelines for admission to each of the leadership degree programs which it offers. These guidelines should be consistent with the mission and should support an objective of producing a high quality student body. The policies should be developed with a clear and reasonable expectation that admitted students will be qualified to complete the program of study. These policies must be readily available to interested parties.

Student Standard 2

An institution must have clear, written guidelines for retention of students in each of the leadership degree programs which it offers. These guidelines should be consistent with the mission of producing high quality graduates and should be developed with a clear and reasonable expectation that continuing students are qualified to complete the program of study. To this end, the department should track the progress and success of students and continually review its retention policies. These policies must be readily available to interested parties.

The Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Accreditation Standards

Accreditation Processes

In order to be considered for accreditation, an institution must be a member of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership and it must meet the Preconditions listed in the Accreditation Standards. The institution must declare its intentions to stand for accreditation by letter to the Academy. The institution must conduct a program review addressing the Accreditation Standards and submit four (4) copies of the program review report to the Academy for consideration. The Program Review Report should address each of the Preconditions and Accreditation Standards. The Report should be accompanied by curriculum vitae for each faculty member teaching in the program and should have exhibits appropriate to establish the institution's compliance with each standard.

Upon receipt of the Program Review Report, the Academy will review the document for completeness. When the Academy determines that an institution is ready for accreditation consideration, it will appoint an accreditation team and arrange with the institution for an accreditation visit.

The accreditation team will read the Program Review Report and visit the institution's campus and review such aspects of the program as it deems necessary to review compliance with accreditation standards. Upon completion of its visit, the team will prepare a written report of its review and recommendations for submission to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will consider the visitation team's report and the Program Review Report and make an accreditation determination. The institution will be notified as to the Board's decision. Institutions qualifying for accreditation will be asked to send representatives to the next Academy conference at which time the institution will be recognized and a plaque will be presented commemorating the institution's achievement.

Accreditation Fees

The Academy offers four levels of accreditation services to interested institutions. For institutions desiring a determination of readiness for accreditation activities, the Academy offers a one day, on site consultation by individuals who are qualified to serve on an accreditation visitation team. This consultation will allow an institution to explore the possibilities of accreditation without the time and expense of a program review.

The second level of service involves a pre-program review consultation. The Academy offers a two day, on site consultation by individuals who are qualified to serve on an accreditation visitation term. This consultation will allow an institution to ensure that there is a reasonable expectation for accreditation prior to preparing a program review.

The Academy offers a reading and evaluation service for institutions engaged in preparing a Program Review Report. Institutions may submit a full report, a partial report, or segments of a report for review by individuals who are qualified to serve on an accreditation visitation team. The individuals will critique the report, partial report, or report segments, and make recommendations concerning the preparation of the report.

Finally, the Academy offers a Program Review Report and visitation evaluation. This process involves the final evaluation of the Report and an on site visit by accreditation specialists to determine whether a program should be accredited.

Fees for a one day, on site consultation are	\$1,000
Fees for a two day, on site pre-program review consultation are	\$ 2,000
Fees for reading and evaluating program review reports are	\$ 500
Fees for final report evaluation and on site accreditation visitation are	\$ 5,000

In addition to the fees described above, institutions are expected to reimburse individuals involved in consultation or accreditation visitations for normal travel expenses. All fees must be prepaid prior to the consultation or visitation. Travel expenses may be reimbursed through normal channels.

Membership Requirements and Fees

In order for an institution to become a member of the Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership, it must meet Preconditions One and Two. Institutional membership fees are \$500 per year. Membership entitles an institution to discounts for participation in accreditation conferences and workshops. Members receive two copies of the *Academy of Strategic and Organizational Leadership Journal*, and the institutional library also receives access to the web publication of that *journal*. Members are eligible for accreditation consideration and institutions must be members in order to be accredited.

Accreditation Workshops and Fees

The Academy will offer accreditation workshops at any regularly scheduled conference meeting upon demand. These workshops will consist of two half day sessions. Morning sessions will be devoted to accreditation standards and procedures. These sessions will be appropriate to attendance by representatives from institutions desiring to explore the possibilities of accreditation. The sessions will be conducted by individuals who are qualified to serve on accreditation visitation teams and will explore accreditation standards and compliance.

Afternoon sessions will be devoted to working with representatives from institutions desiring to actively pursue accreditation. These sessions will be conducted by individuals qualified to serve on accreditation visitation teams and will explore the preparation of a Program Review Report. In addition, participants will be able to discuss issues specific to an institution with the workshop presenters.

Fees for the morning workshop sessions for nonmembers will be \$250 per person

Fees for the morning workshop sessions for members will be \$200 per person

Fees for the afternoon workshop sessions for nonmembers will be \$250 per person

Fees for the afternoon workshop sessions for members will be \$200 per person

Preregistration for each workshop will be required at least two weeks prior to the conference.