

THE ALLIANCE FOR AG HIGHER EDUCATION

ENDORSEMENT CRITERIA

***COLLEGE, INSTITUTE, SEMINARY, AND
DISTANCE EDUCATION LEVEL SCHOOLS***

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ENDORSEMENT CRITERIA:

THE ALLIANCE FOR ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HIGHER EDUCATION Colleges, Universities, Seminary and Non-accredited/Pre-accredited Institutions

These Endorsement Criteria are developed and administered by The Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education (Alliance) of the General Council of the Assemblies of God under the oversight of the Executive Presbytery.

The primary responsibility of the Alliance in its field of activity shall be to act as an agency of the Assemblies of God in fulfilling its mission through:

- (1) Guiding in the development of a higher education system and structure, both traditional and non-traditional; and*
- (2) Directing the national promotion of Assemblies of God higher education and developing resources in cooperation with AG Trust for all postsecondary institutions endorsed by The Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education.*

In keeping with General Council bylaws, these criteria are for the purpose of reviewing, evaluating, and endorsing Assemblies of God institutions of higher learning at the institute, baccalaureate, and graduate level. The endorsement process is intended to facilitate the development of educational institutions that are committed to the mission of the Church, the integration of faith and learning in the Pentecostal tradition, and academic excellence.

These criteria therefore are intended to focus specifically on issues of importance to the Assemblies of God. They assume, except for non-accredited/pre-accredited schools, that the institution will have satisfied the criteria, or standards, of its accrediting association(s) and attempt to avoid unnecessary redundancy with regard to non-ecclesiastical matters. Recognition at all levels of endorsement depends on conformity to the following endorsement criteria and completion of the annual report parts I and II.

The words “must” and “shall” in these criteria denote mandatory requirements for endorsement by the Alliance. “Should” is to be interpreted as a suggestion.

I. Statement of Mission

- A. Every institution shall state its mission in printed form and publicly articulate the same. Though the Alliance respects the right of each endorsed institution to design its own mission, programs of study, and governance principles, the mission documents of each institution must be in keeping with the stated purposes of the Assemblies of God as set forth in the General Council Constitution.
- B. While each institution may state its mission differently, all mission documents shall include the following minimal objectives:
 - 1. The integration of faith and learning;
 - 2. The formation of mature Christian character and spiritual life;
 - 3. The inculcation of a strong, fervent interest in the goal of world evangelism;
 - 4. The commitment to ethnic and gender diversity while preparing students for leadership and ministry in a diverse and globally interdependent world;
 - 5. The development of loyalty to the doctrines and principles of the Assemblies of God; and,
 - 6. The preparation of leaders for the Kingdom of God and the Assemblies of God.
- C. Endorsed institutions shall provide evidence that their mission relates to the Assemblies of God movement and Pentecostal doctrine and that their graduates reflect that their stated mission is being fulfilled. To accomplish this, the Alliance, in cooperation with each endorsed school, will conduct periodic surveys of graduates to ascertain their religious/denominational affiliation and whether they are continuing to attend church regularly.

II. Accreditation

- A. Accreditation involves recognition by an association with no organic ties to the Assemblies of God. It is based on criteria commonly accepted among institutions of higher learning.
- B. Endorsement from the Assemblies of God indicates the school has met certain denominationally specific criteria relating to doctrine, polity, and other spiritual values in addition to the academic excellence represented by accreditation.
 - 1. The endorsement of an institution by The Alliance is based solely on a decision that it faithfully reflects Assemblies of God doctrine and polity in its mission, governance, administration and faculty, and curriculum as explained in these Endorsement Criteria. Endorsement also involves

measurement of institutional fulfillment as articulated in section I. Statement of Mission.

2. Endorsed institutions that are accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) shall file with its annual report to the Alliance, the current letter from its accrediting association(s) disclosing its status of accreditation.
 - a. Any change in the status of accreditation may result in a review and possible change in endorsement by the Alliance.
 - b. To avoid duplication of the evaluation processes of CHEA-approved accrediting associations, the Alliance will review the self-studies submitted to, and the evaluation reports of, the institution's accrediting association(s).
 - c. However, the Alliance may initiate its own evaluation, followed by appropriate actions, in the case of significant concerns and recommendations stated by the accrediting association(s).
 - d. Non-accredited/Pre-accredited schools may be endorsed without being accredited, provided that the following criteria are met:
 - i. A minimum enrollment of 25 students (FTE) for two consecutive semesters; and,
 - ii. Non-accredited/Pre-accredited schools must complete a Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Non-Accredited/Pre-accredited Schools. In addition, Alliance staff will conduct periodic endorsement evaluation visits to assist the institution in moving toward accredited status and to provide consultation.

III. Governance

- A. Institutions endorsed by the Alliance must be sponsored by The General Council of the Assemblies of God, or one or more district councils of the Assemblies of God.
- B. Ninety percent of the membership of the governing board shall be affiliated with the Assemblies of God. Ten percent of its membership may be Pentecostal but not Assemblies of God (please note exception clause – IV, B, 1).
- C. Amenability to and communication with the General Council of the Assemblies of God shall be effected through the Alliance. Amenability is as defined in these criteria and the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Council.

1. The president of the Alliance, with the assistance of the Alliance professional staff, is the primary liaison with endorsed institutions.
 2. Information that regularly shall be reported to the Alliance includes the following:
 - a. Annual letters or notifications of accreditation status;
 - b. Annual reports (parts I and II);
 - c. Self-studies for accrediting visits and/or focused visits that may be required by the institution's accrediting association(s); and,
 - d. Visiting team reports from accrediting associations and/or focused team visits.
- D. Endorsed institutions are encouraged to engage in collaborative agreements with other AG institutions to help students achieve their desired educational goals.
1. Advertising must not compare other institutions inaccurately or in an unfavorable light.
 2. Endorsed institutions may also engage in articulation and other collaborative agreements with non-AG institutions.

IV. Administration and Faculty

- A. Since the institution was founded to serve the needs of students within, or in sympathy with, the Pentecostal theological and spiritual tradition, the following spiritual and ecclesiastical requirements, interpreted within the context of the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God, shall be met by all full- and part-time administrators and faculty:
1. Be a born again Christian (John 3:3);
 2. Be personally baptized in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4;
 3. Be a model of the Spirit-filled life (Galatians 5:22-23);
 4. Be a member of and regularly attend an Assemblies of God church, or be a credentialed AG minister who has received permission from the institution to minister in a non-AG setting; and,
 5. Annually sign a statement affirming loyalty to the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God; a personal experience of Holy Spirit baptism according to Acts 2:4.; and a willingness to influence

others with regard to loyalty to the Assemblies of God church and theology.

B. Notwithstanding the above, certain exceptions may be made for faculty only. These exceptions must be documented and submitted annually to the Alliance. The exceptions are as follows:

1. An institution shall not have more than 20 percent of its faculty FTE to be non-Assemblies of God. In certain instances an endorsed institution may recognize that it is not feasible to meet the established endorsement criteria pertaining to percentages of non-Assemblies of God faculty or board members due to ongoing institutional realities, such as a demonstrated missional commitment to include Pentecostal believers and churches not currently identified with the Assemblies of God. In such cases, the endorsed institution may apply to the AAGHE for a recognized exception so as remain in good standing as an endorsed institution and effectively carry out its institutional mission.

In processing such applications, the AAGHE and the endorsed institution should consider such factors as:

- The unique regional characteristics and realities faced by the institution making application.
- The institutional mission and affiliation as defined in the institution's governance documents.
- Collective evidence of institutional commitment to Pentecostal doctrine, mission, and practice.
- Any local processes or initiatives in place designed to evaluate the qualifications of new members of the institution's Faculty and Board, including the evaluation of the candidate's compatibility with the Assemblies of God.
- The institution's programs for the ongoing development and evaluation of members of the Board and Faculty, specifically with regard to each individual's support of Pentecostal doctrine, mission, and practice.
- Involvement of sister organizations that share the historic commitment of the Assemblies of God to Pentecostal doctrine, mission, and practice.
- Demonstrated cooperation on the part of the institution with Assemblies of God churches, ministers, and ministries.
- **In no case will an exception be given to an institution to exceed 30% non-A/G membership for full-time faculty or board of directors.** (Present criteria: 20% faculty, 10% board)

As in the case of any endorsement action, exceptions to endorsement criteria granted by the AAGHE may be reviewed by the Executive Presbytery and altered at their discretion.

2. Non-AG but Pentecostal faculty may teach Bible and theology courses but non-AG who are non-Pentecostal may not teach Bible and theology courses; and,
 3. Part-time faculty teaching three credit hours or less per semester are not to be counted in the calculation of the 20% non-AG faculty FTE.
- C. Endorsed institutions shall have enforceable church and chapel attendance policies for administrators and faculty that are approved by the governing board.
- D. All full-time seminary faculty must be credentialed ministers of the Assemblies of God.
- E. The Alliance shall maintain a registry of potential Assemblies of God faculty qualified for employment by endorsed schools. Endorsed schools shall consult with the Alliance office for guidance in seeking to fill available vacancies prior to offering any faculty position to a non-Assemblies of God person.

V. Curriculum

- A. Endorsed institutions shall intentionally integrate faith and learning throughout the curriculum.
1. Instructional materials shall be consistent with Assemblies of God beliefs wherever possible and each course shall be taught from an Assemblies of God perspective. It is understood that all textbooks may not support every Assemblies of God doctrine, but conclusions drawn by faculty shall support Assemblies of God doctrinal positions.
 2. All course syllabi shall reflect support for the mission of the Assemblies of God.
- B. Two-year degree programs
1. Regardless of major, two-year degree programs shall require a minimum of nine (9) hours of Bible and theology with the exception that students transferring into these programs are required to take six (6) hours of Bible and theology.
 2. Programs leading to ministerial credentials in the Assemblies of God shall include not less than one course on Assemblies of God history and polity.

C. Three-year degree programs

1. Three-year diploma programs preparing students for full-time vocational ministry shall require not less than 30 hours of relevant Bible and theology and not less than 8 hours of practical ministry courses that support the design of the program.
2. All other three-year diploma programs shall require 18 hours of Bible and theology.

D. Four-year degree programs

1. Four-year degree programs preparing students for full-time ministry (e.g. pastor, youth pastor, missionary, evangelist, etc.) shall require a minimum of 39 hours of Bible and theology and not less than 10 credit hours of practical ministry courses that support the design of the program.
2. Programs preparing students for other church-related ministry (e.g. Christian education director, children's pastor, church music, pastoral care, adult/family life, biblical studies, pre-seminary, etc.) shall require a minimum of 30 hours of Bible and theology and not less than 8 credit hours of practical ministry courses pertinent to the major.
3. All other four-year degree programs shall require a minimum of 18 hours of Bible and theology. Students transferring are required to take a minimum of Bible and theology credits according to the following scale:
 - a. 46 or less hours transferred 18 credits
 - b. 47-77 hours transferred 15 credits
 - c. 78-93 hours transferred 12 credits
 - d. 94 or more hours transferred 9 credits

- E. Graduate and Seminary programs shall give particular emphasis to spiritual formation and understanding of Assemblies of God beliefs and practices, and shall provide for practicums, internships, or supervised ministry as appropriate for the discipline.

VI. Student Life and Ministry

- A. Endorsed institutions shall establish viable policies for enhancing the spiritual formation of its students in the Pentecostal tradition.

B. Endorsed institutions shall observe the following admissions criteria for all programs at all levels. Exceptions may be made for distance education studies, degree completion programs, and graduate teacher education.

1. Applicants accepted for enrollment must:
 - a. Testify to being a born-again Christian (John 3:3) and manifest a willingness to be involved in Christian service;
 - b. Be in sympathy with the accepted essentials of Christian faith as held by the Assemblies of God; and
 - c. Have a pastor's reference attest to the applicant's faith in Christ and consistent Christian lifestyle.

C. Endorsed institutions in striving toward the spiritual formation of their students shall:

1. Encourage the pursuit of spiritual maturity and excellence;
2. Encourage the pursuit of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit;
3. Stimulate an appreciation for the Word of God;
4. Develop a sense of appreciation for and responsibility to the Body of Christ and for the Pentecostal tradition and Assemblies of God Fellowship of which the institution belongs;
5. Encourage the provision of and give emphasis to private prayer in the daily schedule;
6. Encourage public prayer and worship on the part of both students and faculty;
7. Hold a minimum of three (3) chapel services per week with attendance of all students required. Administration and faculty shall also be expected to attend in keeping with the institutional policy to which they are annually accountable. The primary focus of the three chapels required for these endorsement criteria should be on prayer, praise, and the proclamation of the Word. Business sessions for classes, student government, and other non-religious gatherings may not be counted as required chapels. Additional organized opportunities for participation in spiritual enrichment activities such as Bible studies, prayer groups, and student ministries should also be provided and encouraged;

8. Encourage usage of students in chapel services as a ministry development opportunity;
 9. Include spiritual emphasis week in the institution's calendar in which class schedules may be adjusted and evening meetings held;
 10. Give emphasis to student participation in giving to world ministries causes including education;
 11. Encourage the ministry of the Holy Spirit in campus life, including the possibility that classes and the regular program may be suspended for special times; and,
 12. Establish and publish a written policy regarding required chapel and church attendance, to which the students shall be held accountable.
- D. Endorsed institutions shall establish procedures and develop opportunities to encourage the practical application of the principles of the Church in Christian service. At a minimum, these shall include:
1. For ministry-related undergraduate majors, each student shall have documented student ministry activity in at least one half of the semesters in which the student is enrolled; and,
 2. For other undergraduate majors, each student should have documented student ministry activity for at least two semesters.
- E. Each institution should encourage and keep accurate records of the World Ministries giving of the student body.
- F. Compulsory chapel attendance policies and policies for student ministry activities are not required for graduate, seminary and degree completion programs. However, schools with these programs are expected to provide chapel opportunities and/or other appropriate spiritual formation activities for students enrolled in these programs.
- G. For distance education programs, policies for student ministry activities should be consistent with policies for traditional programs.

VII. Specific Criteria for Schools with Continuing Education Programs

The Alliance defines continuing education programs as, "study that does not require a high school or equivalent diploma for admission, and which is not transcribed for college-level credit." Continuing education programs must meet the following general guidelines:

1. The programs must not detract from the effectiveness or the financial viability of the school's regular academic programs;
2. Advertising and internal documents must clearly indicate the differences between regular academic programs and continuing education programs;
3. Transcripts and costs for continuing education programs must be different from regular academic programs;
4. Students in continuing education programs must be reported to the Alliance as such, rather than as regular academic enrollments;
5. Continuing education programs must have clear mission statements that are in writing and can be evaluated by the Alliance; and,
6. Other applicable endorsement criteria of the Alliance must be met.

VIII. Specific Criteria for Non-accredited/Pre-accredited Institutes

In addition to distinctions mentioned under prior sections, the following specific criteria for non-accredited/pre-accredited institutions must be met.

1. Permanent records should be stored in a fireproof vault on campus or some other secure place off-campus.
2. The library must be of sufficient quantity and quality to support the areas of academic study offered. The librarian must have sufficient knowledge in the field to be able to help students in their research. All volumes must be classified and indexed in accordance with the Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal systems.
3. Campus facilities must be adequate to enable the institution to fulfill its purposes.
4. The campus must be well-kept and neat in appearance.
5. Buildings must be maintained in a good state of repair and comply with the appropriate building codes of the area.
6. Extension programs must follow policies that are agreeable to the Alliance.
7. The institution must maintain financial reports showing monthly and year-to-date income and expenses; have policies to keep student accounts current and provide for delinquent accounts.

8. Non-accredited/Pre-accredited Institutions shall have a faculty policy manual that includes faculty evaluation and development, syllabi, teaching load, salary schedule and benefits, committee assignments, general policies of the institution, and other obligations and responsibilities.
9. A student policy manual that clearly outlines policies regarding expectations for student behavior, accountability, rules and disciplinary actions, appeal procedures, and other general expectations for student life on campus; and,
10. Policies and services regarding scholarships and financial aid, employment, health, residence halls, placement, intramural athletics, and counseling services.
11. Deny readmission of students whose financial accounts are not current or for which appropriate arrangements have not been made; and be current in meeting accounts payable and payroll obligations.
12. Catalogs and other public relations material must accurately reflect the programs and services of the college.
13. Institutional documents, including advertising, must accurately reflect how credits may transfer to accredited schools.
14. The governing board of the institution shall conduct all of its affairs in keeping with generally accepted standards of board governance. Along with this, the board shall also bring to its work the highest standards of Christian ethics and servant leadership, ensure the fiscal stability of the institution through responsible stewardship and financial provision, and arrange for the on-going development of its members with regard to these skills and values.
15. The president of the institution shall be a voting member of the governing board but shall not serve as the chairperson. Other persons employed by the institution may serve on the board at the invitation of the president and the board, but only in a nonvoting consultative capacity.

IX. Non-compliance with Criteria

When an endorsed institution has been determined to be in non-compliance with endorsement standards, the governing board of the non-compliant institution will be notified in writing by the Alliance. Depending on the nature and degree of non-compliance, the institution will be asked to submit for approval to the Alliance board a 1 to 10 year plan for bringing the institution into compliance. Failure to meet compliance standards within a reasonable time period, as determined by the Alliance board, will result in the non-compliance being reported to the Executive Presidency of the Assemblies of God for appropriate action, which may range

from a probationary time period for compliance to be met to withdrawal of endorsement.