ACCET Document 3.BA – Applied Bachelor’s Degree (BA) Template

Introduction

The Applied Bachelor’s Degree (BA) Template must be completed by institutions offering applied bachelor’s degree (BA) programs. The template supplements and augments ACCET Document 3.1 – Analytic Self-Evaluation Report, which incorporates ACCET Document 2 – Standards for Accreditation. The template expands upon the ACCET Standards specifically referenced herein by adding Specific Field Criteria and Supplemental Questions/Statements to elicit a more relevant and valid self-evaluation of the institution and emphasize those standards where unique characteristics are identified.

Applied Bachelor’s Degree Programs

An applied bachelor’s degree program has a comprehensive curriculum that appropriately balances general education and occupationally related coursework to prepare graduates for gainful employment and career development. Institutions awarding the applied bachelor’s degree must clearly demonstrate, through their mission, planning, curricula, faculty, and student services, the heightened commitment required to ensure student outcomes that distinguish the graduate of the bachelor’s degree program from the graduate of a similar program offered at the certificate or associate degree level.

General Requirements

ACCET-accredited institutions wishing to add an applied bachelor’s degree program must make application using ACCET Document 25.BA – Application for Applied Bachelor’s Degree Program, with reference to and in accordance with ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, or Existing Programs/Courses. They must also be authorized by the appropriate state education agency to confer the applied bachelor’s degree or must demonstrate that no such authority exists by specific reference to state statute and/or regulation.

All applied bachelor’s degree programs must be a minimum of four academic years in length and must be measured in quarter or semester credit hours, with each degree requiring a minimum of 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours. The programs are typically offered over a period of eight semesters, twelve quarters, or the equivalent.

The curriculum for the applied bachelor’s degree program must include the vocational and general education courses necessary to meet the specific degree requirements and the measurable educational objectives of the program. All degree programs must address the development of competencies in general education that enhance essential skills for career development and continued learning. These competencies must relate to and support the vocational objectives of the applied bachelor’s degree program in both substance and number. A minimum of 30 semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours must be included in general education.

Standard I – Mission, Core Values, Ethics, and Planning

The institution has a mission, core values, and ethics that are compatible with the mission, scope, and standards of ACCET and has an effective planning process to enhance and improve the
institution and its education, training, and services. The institution operates with integrity in all matters and in accordance with the “Principles of Ethics for ACCET Institutions” at all times.

A. **Mission:** The institution clearly states its mission and makes it public. The mission defines the purpose of the institution and provides a definitive basis upon which to deliver and assess its education and training programs. The institution establishes and utilizes specific criteria to measure whether it is achieving its mission. The education and training provided by the institution are consistent with its mission and are supported by documented evidence of continued need, including successful student outcomes, projected market demand, and positive market experience.

*Specific Field Criteria for BA:* The reasons for offering an applied bachelor’s degree program are consistent with the institution’s mission, and the benefits to the target population have been clearly determined and documented.

**Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:**

- Describe the methods used to determine the need for an applied bachelor’s degree program. Include a summary of data accumulated. Such data may include but are not limited to surveys of employers, graduates, and current students; local/regional occupational outlook projections; regional studies and surveys; potential impact of competition; and current students, facilities, equipment, and personnel needs.

- Provide a narrative description of the expected benefits of the applied bachelor’s degree program to students. If the institution offers a certificate or associate degree version of the same program (e.g., programs at both levels focusing on the same or highly similar career fields), provide an analysis of the expected vocational outcomes of each program.

**Standard III – Financial Capacity and Responsibility**

The institution is fiscally sound and demonstrates ethical financial practices.

A. **Financial Procedures:** The institution assesses its finances at adequate intervals, at least quarterly. Written policies and procedures exist for proper financial controls and the supervision of financial management staff. Tuition charges are applied fairly and consistently. All financial transactions, including all charges and payments of tuition and other program costs are properly recorded and tracked on individual student ledgers. Cancellation and refund policies are written, fair, and equitable; are consistently administered; and comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Qualified and capable individuals manage and evaluate the effectiveness of the financial operations and practices.

*Specific Field Criteria for BA:* Cancellation and refund policies and procedures are structured to reflect the periods for which students are financially obligated to the institution, which will necessarily be less than the total enrollment period for bachelor’s degree programs.

**Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:**
• Provide the institution's written cancellation and refund policy and corresponding procedures, forms, refund calculation worksheets, etc., specific to its applied bachelor's degree programs to demonstrate that such policies are oriented to the period of time over which students are financially obligated, rather than to the total period of enrollment.

• For what terms or periods of time are students financially obligated at any one point? How does the enrollment of students over multiple years affect student financial aid?

B. Financial Assistance/Scholarships: The institution ensures that any student financial assistance programs, including federal and state financial aid programs, institutional scholarships, and externally funded scholarships, are responsibly administered, governed by written policies and procedures, and in full compliance with relevant statutes and regulations. All student financial assistance is awarded in a fair and equitable manner.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: Institutions offering applied bachelor’s degree programs utilize procedures for administering and monitoring financial aid eligibility and disbursement appropriate to the length of the program.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

• Describe any separate processes, distinct from those for certificate and/or associate degree programs, for purposes of determining continued student eligibility for financial aid disbursements relative to satisfactory academic progress (SAP).

Standard IV – Curriculum Design and Development

The institution’s curriculum design and instructional materials are up-to-date, educationally sound, and appropriate for the expected outcomes of the program/courses.

A. Educational Goals and Objectives: The institution’s programs and courses have appropriate and measurable educational goals and objectives. The curriculum content and learning experiences are preplanned and present a sound, systematic, and sequential learning experience for students. The content and length of programs ensure that sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skill elements are included to meet the specific and measurable performance outcomes expected for the courses and programs. The institution must demonstrate that the length of the program is appropriate to provide a student with the requisite knowledge and skills of the courses and programs.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: The curriculum for the applied bachelor’s degree program must demonstrate the appropriate academic rigor and include both the vocational and the general education courses necessary to meet the specific degree requirements and the measurable educational objectives of the program. The general education components of the applied bachelor’s degree program(s) support the requirements of the vocational objectives both in scope and in number. The curriculum includes a course numbering system that incorporates course sequencing, including prerequisites. The following policy guidelines govern applied bachelor’s degree programs:
1. An applied bachelor’s degree program must include a comprehensive curriculum with appropriate coursework to achieve the educational objectives of the program. The curriculum must provide an appropriate balance between general education courses and technical, occupationally related courses. There must also be an appropriate balance between lower-division and upper-division coursework, with the program comprised of a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of upper-level coursework.

2. An applied bachelor’s degree program must be a minimum of four academic years in length and must be measured in quarter or semester credit hours, with each degree requiring a minimum of 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours. The program is typically offered over a period of eight semesters, twelve quarters, or equivalent.

3. An applied bachelor’s degree program must include a minimum of 30 semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of general education courses that are designed to develop essential academic skills for enhanced and continued learning. The general education courses must be distributed among at least three disciplines. Examples of general education courses include natural and physical sciences (mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, etc.); social and behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, history, geography, economics, etc.); and humanities and fine arts (English, written and oral communication, literature, foreign language). A student must take at least two general education courses in each of the three areas.

4. An applied bachelor’s degree program must include a minimum of 60% of the coursework (at least 72 semester credit hours or 108 quarter credit hours) in the occupational field for which the degree is awarded. Within those occupationally related courses, an institution may offer one or more concentrations, which provide a focus area of training and establish specialized learning experiences beyond the generalist level. Concentrations must consist of at least 24 semester credit hours or 36 quarter credit hours of occupationally specialized coursework.

5. Courses required to complete the applied bachelor's degree program must be offered on a schedule that allows students to progress through the program and complete their degree requirements in a timely manner, without unscheduled interruption.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

- List each degree program and state the occupational and general objectives of the program, including the name of the credential that is awarded. Provide an overview of the program design (e.g., lecture, laboratory, externship/internship/clinical experience, interactive distance learning). Note that all IDL programs must be separately approved by ACCET for this delivery method. Refer to ACCET Document 3.IDL – Interactive Distance Learning Template for specific criteria.

- Describe how the degree program(s) emphasizes the achievement of both vocational and general education objectives and describe how the general education coursework supports the achievement of the vocational objectives.
• Describe how the courses in the degree program are sequenced. Provide an explanation and example of the course numbering system, including a description of how course prerequisites are determined and published.

• Describe how the program’s structure provides for an increasing level of difficulty in order to enhance a student’s mastery of the required skill and educational elements.

• Utilizing Document 25.6, provide a listing of all technical and general education courses that clearly delineates credit hours, lecture hours, lab hours, and externship/internship hours to show compliance with the general requirements for applied bachelor’s degree programs above.

B. Program/Instructional Materials: Program materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, instructional guides, and texts demonstrate the appropriate scope, sequence, and depth of each program or course in relation to the stated goals and objectives. Instructional materials, including supplementary textbooks, software, learning activities, visual aids, electronic links, and other teaching tools support the goals and objectives. All materials are relevant, up-to-date, readily available, and facilitate positive learning outcomes.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: The use of relevant technology, research within the field, and reference materials is reflected in program materials.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

• Describe how the institution ensures that the curriculum and corresponding instructional materials include reference to current technology, research, and reference materials. How does the institution ensure that students have access to relevant, current research and reference materials?

Standard V – Instructional Delivery and Resources

The institution utilizes appropriate and effective instructional methods and other resources to ensure sound instructional delivery, which may be provided through a variety of delivery modes, including traditional classroom/lab instruction, interactive distance learning, and blended instruction.

A. Instructional Methods: Instructional methods encourage active and motivated engagement by students. Written policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the curricula are followed and consistently applied by all instructional personnel. The instructional methodology is consistent with contemporary training industry standards and appropriate to the educational goals and curricular objectives, facilitates learning, and serves the individual learning needs and objectives of students. Instructional methods provide encouragement, challenges, and learning opportunities/activities for all enrolled students, taking into consideration different learning abilities and styles, prior levels of achievement, and different learning modalities such as visual, audio, and kinesthetic.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: Program coursework includes research assignments that are relevant to the program’s vocational and general education objectives.
Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

- Describe how the research assignments within the coursework enhance the vocational and general education objectives of the program. Give examples of research projects assigned and incorporated in the syllabi to accomplish these objectives.

B. Equipment, Supplies, and Learning Resources: Equipment, supplies, and other learning resources support the goals and objectives of the programs offered by the institution. Adequate, appropriate, up-to-date, and functional equipment, supplies, learning resources, and furnishings are readily available for instructor and student use and for the effective delivery of the institution’s education and training.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: Adequate access to reference, research, and information resources, whether traditional or electronic, is provided. These resources and activities supplement the curriculum and instructional methodology. A library or comparable resource center must be maintained by the institution and readily accessible to students, with appropriate training provided to students in the use of these resources. Allocation of financial resources is commensurate with the scope and purpose of the library/resource center. A qualified librarian maintains and monitors the resource holdings. Faculty input regarding the scope of the library/resource center is solicited and utilized.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

- Describe the content of the library/resource center, including online resources, online full-text databases, and other electronic media, and the means by which the institution provides access to students for study and research activities. Describe the training that is provided to students regarding the use of the library/resource center, online resources, and electronic media.

- Explain the methods used to organize reference materials for easy retrieval and storage.

- What are the scheduled hours of operation of the library/resource center? What are the qualifications of the librarian who manages the library/resource facility and who is responsible for assisting students and faculty during the hours of operation?

- Describe the financial resources and budget available for supporting and maintaining the library/resource center.

- Describe the process that is employed by the institution when reviewing and improving the quality of the library/resource center and the library holdings (e.g., student use/trends, faculty usage and input, professional associations/organizations, and industry input).

Standard VI – Qualifications and Supervision of Instructional Personnel

The institution ensures that qualified instructors, under professional and capable direction, effectively deliver educational and training services.
A. **Qualifications of Instructional Personnel:** Instructional personnel possess the appropriate combination of relevant educational credential(s), specialized training and/or certification, work experience, and demonstrated teaching and classroom management skills, which qualifies them for their training assignments. Instructional personnel meet all relevant accreditation, federal, state, local, and/or industry-specific requirements.

**Specific Field Criteria for BA:** General education faculty must hold, at minimum, a master’s degree with verifiable content expertise in the subject(s) they are assigned to teach (e.g., documentation of at least 18 hours of coursework in the field). Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall have, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree and related experience, certifications/licensure, and/or education/training. Official transcripts are on file to support the qualifications of all instructors assigned to teach the bachelor’s degree program.

**Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:**

- Describe the institution’s minimum qualifications requirements for all faculty teaching the applied bachelor’s degree program(s).

- List the instructors who will teach the general education courses and the instructors who will teach other courses in the applied bachelor’s degree program. Identify the specific courses that each instructor will teach. Provide the resumes of all listed faculty to demonstrate that the instructors have the required content expertise in the subject(s) they are assigned to teach.

- What procedures are followed to collect and store official transcripts and/or licensing certification documentation?

B. **Supervision of Instruction:** Individuals with relevant education and experience in instructional delivery and management supervise instructional personnel. Supervisors of instructional personnel demonstrate effective evaluation and direction of such personnel. At least annually, qualified supervisors conduct and document an in-class observation, and review with the instructor that classroom observation, to include any administrative responsibilities as applicable to the institution and any collected student feedback.

**Specific Field Criteria for BA:** Applied bachelor’s degree programs must be supervised by a director of education/training who holds at least a master’s degree and demonstrates education, experience, and competence to manage the instructional program and its faculty.

**Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:**

- Provide a position description for the director of education/training and include a copy of his or her resume and/or ACCET Document 6 – Faculty/Administrative Personnel Form.

- How does the institution determine the qualifications necessary to perform all assigned duties, such as hiring and training qualified instructors, monitoring classroom activities, providing professional growth and in-service activities, and supporting the program revision processes?
Standard VII – Admissions and Student Services

The institution recruits and enrolls only qualified students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the education and training services and provides student services appropriate to their needs.

A. Recruitment: All advertising, promotional materials, and representations made by or on behalf of the institution for recruiting purposes, including web content, catalog, and social media postings, make only justifiable and provable claims regarding the courses, programs, costs, location(s), instructional personnel, student services, outcomes, and other benefits. All communications with prospective students are ethical, honest, and consistent with ACCET policies. The institution does not state or imply that employment, occupational advancement, and/or certification and licensing are guaranteed.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: The name of the degree program(s) and the credential(s) awarded must be expressly stated in all information and promotional materials. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the general education requirements and those of the concentration. The catalog also must provide an explanation of the course numbering system and clearly identify lower-division and upper-division courses, along with any prerequisites.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

• Describe how the catalog and advertising and promotional materials, including the website, reflect the occupational nature of the institution's degree program(s) and the credential awarded.

• Attach the catalog that clearly and accurately describes the applied bachelor's degree program(s), including an explanation of the course numbering system and course descriptions for all coursework, including general education.

B. Admissions/Enrollment: The institution's written policies for admissions and enrollment are clearly stated, defined, and in compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. Reliable and regular means are utilized to ensure that, prior to acceptance, all applicants are able to benefit from the education and training services, consistent with ACCET policies. The enrollment process, including any online process, is preplanned, effective, and regularly monitored by the institution to ensure its integrity.

The written enrollment agreement, contract, or application, as applicable, is furnished to appropriate parties before any payment or obligation is made and clearly identifies the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties, including (1) all costs stated in clear and explicit language, and (2) cancellation and refund policies that comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

Specific Field Criteria for BA: The institution must only enroll applicants who have (1) a high school diploma or a recognized equivalency certificate and (2) at least the minimum level of English proficiency required for the program. The institution must maintain in student files documented evidence that students meet all admission requirements prior to enrollment and must maintain in student files high school transcripts to evidence high school graduation or
equivalency certificates, along with documented evidence of students’ English proficiency for non-native English speakers.

Supplemental Questions/Statements for BA:

• Describe the admissions policy for accepting students into the applied bachelor’s degree program(s). How do the admissions requirements differ for students enrolling in applied bachelor’s degree programs as opposed to those students enrolling in certificate or diploma programs?

• What documentation is maintained in the student record to reflect the basis for the admission of each student? What procedures are followed in order to obtain evidence of high school or equivalency certificates?