

OLEF

The Open Latch Education Foundation

Initial Accreditation Application

For Faculty-School Colleges



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**OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges**

Table of Contents

TERMS	3
CORE VALUES	10
ACCREDITATION STATUS	12
SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES	13
INITIAL ACCREDITATION (PROCESS OF)	23
RENEWAL ACCREDITATION (PROCESS OF)	24
FEES & DUES	25
ANNUAL REPORTS	26
INFRACTION POLICY	28
APPLICATION FORM	29

OLEF Accreditation Manual

For Faculty-School Colleges

TERMS

The following terms are defined here in order to clarify how they are to be understood concerning OLEF accreditation matters.

Accreditation

A faculty school is accredited when a collection of qualified third-party assessors agrees that the classes offered by the faculty are college-level and, if the classes are offered as forming the requirements of a degree, that the class offerings are in concordance with the traditional core and elective classes of that degree.

Articulation

Articulation is the process two faculty groups share when (1) the classes of one faculty group are viewed by both groups as interchangeable with the classes of the other group and (2) each group agrees to accept the other group's credits when students transfer from one group to the other.

Assessor

Any person affiliated with the OLEF foundation in such a way that his or her evaluation of a faculty group can be applied towards that group's accreditation application.

Level-1 Assessor

A professionally employed member of the public, or someone who has been so employed, who understands and supports the goals of the OLEF.

Level-2 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college or traditional college or university for at least 2 years or who has taught on the faculty of a high school in the United States for at least 5 years.

Level-3 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college or traditional college or university for at least 5 years.

Level-4 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college or traditional college or university for at least 10 years, or a person who has been on the faculty of a traditional college or university for at least 5 years and who has also been the chair or coordinator of an academic department of the humanities for at least 1 year.

Bachelor of Arts Degree

A Bachelor of Arts degree ("BA") is a degree comprising at least 30 credits of core-learning classes, at least 32 credits of discipline-specific classes that form a major, and at least 58 other credits. The BA degree must be at least 120 credits and should not surpass 150 credits by many credits, if any. A minimum of 25% of these credits must be administered via land classes.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Block

A block is a learning experience that either (1) is administered at an accelerated pace (a class meets for 8 hours a day for 4 days instead of for 3 hours a week for 10 weeks) or (2) is administered through out-of-the ordinary means (for example, students earn credit for a history class by traveling as a cohort through historical land sites. Faculty groups must contact the OLEF to check whether the proposed block will be accepted as effective credit that we will archive and to see whether the credit will be considered “land” or “online” credit.

Board

A board is a body consisting of at least three members that exists to provide third-party oversight for the overall management of a college. For administrative purposes, a board is expected to have a board director, which can be so called or called by another name. At least one board member must be a member of the public, and at least two board members must be non-faculty. The board may be called a Board of Directors or a Board of Advisors.

Class

A class may be defined as any pedagogically structured, continual interaction between a student and a teacher that exists for a set time and that awards the student credit for its successful completion.

Mediated Class

A mediated class is a class for which the personal interaction between the student and the teacher is conducted via electronic and/or postal mediation. Although most mediated classes arise as a way of facilitating long-distance education, geographical distance is not a necessary characteristic.

Non-mediated Class

A non-mediated class is a class for which the personal interaction between the student and the teacher is in-person and on-site for at least two-thirds of the total duration of the class.

Comprehensive

A comprehensive (“comp”) is a cumulative test designed to reveal a student’s total apprehension, retention, and mastery of certain data or terms of a subject. Although classes may use a comp as a final exam, comps can stand alone as a learning unit. This is to say, certain data can be acquired by the student outside the formal structure of a class, and for such data a comp is sufficient to reveal apprehension, retention, and mastery. As a learning unit, a comp can be sufficient in itself to award credits to students who successfully complete it. These credit count as mediated credits or online credits because they do not have to be administered through a land class.

Concentration

A concentration is any collection of learning units or classes that are connected to each other by a common subject matter. A concentration must total at least 12 credits.

Core-Learning Units (“CLUs”)

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

A core-learning unit is a learning unit that awards students credit upon its successful apprehension, retention, and mastery of skills and concepts deemed necessary to the basic processes of logical thinking, scientific investigation, philosophical analysis, aesthetic understanding, and collegiate reading and writing ability. (See more at “Learning Units”.)

NOTE: Some faculty groups may decide to label these units differently. A common alternate designation is “General Learning Classes”.

Credit

A credit represents work done toward the completion of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Credits provide a way to gauge a student’s progress: 20 credits earned toward the completion of a 120-credit BA shows that the student is a sixth of the way toward holding the degree. Credits are not necessarily calibrated to tuition cost or real-time units like class hours.

Discipline-Specific Units (“DSUs”)

A discipline-specific unit awards students credit upon their successful apprehension, retention, and mastery of skills and concepts deemed necessary to the mastery of a specific subject or discipline within a field of learning. DSUs are the necessary components of a major or minor. The majority of DSUs should be classes. (See more at “Learning Units”.)

NOTE: Some faculty groups may decide to label these units differently. A common alternate designation is “Major Classes” and “Minor Classes”.

Doctorate

The faculty-school system offers two types of doctorates: The Doctorate of Arts (DA) and the Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). Both have to have a minimum of 120 doctoral credits, a pre-candidate/candidate division, and a dissertation portfolio. See “Doctorate of Arts” and “Doctorate of Philosophy” below.

Doctorate of Arts

The Doctorate of Arts (DA) is a terminal degree that demonstrated to the satisfaction of the directing mentor and an outside evaluator that the student knows the plenary current popular and academic discussion of the subject of the DA and can apply that knowledge to services or products to the non-scholastic community. The central demonstration of this is a project, platform, or text that is developed in the process of the DA that can be of service to the lay community.

Doctorate of Philosophy

The Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) is a terminal degree that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the directing mentor and an outside evaluator that the student knows the plenary current academic discussion of the subject of the PhD and can make a genuine original contribution to the current scholastic conversation by means of traditional publications or original projects that showcase defensible contributions to the professional arena.

Double-Blind Process

A double-blind process employs a third party that renders two interacting parties anonymous to each other for as long as their interaction exists. For OLEF accreditation purposes, the Executive Director ensures that the documents in a faculty group’s application package are anonymous to

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

the assessors chosen to evaluate the application, and that the identity of the assessors is in turn anonymous to the faculty group.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is the administrative head of OLEF. His or her job is mainly fourfold: (1) to assure that the initial-accreditation process is fair, consistent, timely, and properly blinded; (2) to assign renewal-accreditation evaluation duties to a level-4 assessor; (3) to oversee dues and fees collection, submission of annual reports from faculty schools, and the archiving of faculty groups' transcripts; and (4) to raise funding and promote popular awareness of the foundation. The Executive Director must also fully train his or her assistant so that the assistant can serve as an interim Executive Director in case of the current Executive Director's unforeseen departure.

Executive Director's Council

The Executive Director's Council is constituted of the Executive Director and two other assessors from at least the level-3 tier that cast the final vote regarding a faculty group's initial-accreditation application.

Faculty Group

A faculty group is a group of teachers who knowingly and willingly collaborate in order to provide instruction of core subjects of a discipline or field of study to students seeking to earn a college-level certificate, AA, BA, MA, DA or PhD. These teachers have at least the equivalent of the degree level they are teaching in plus 5 years of professional experience in any field and must have either taught on the traditional college level or have received teacher-training by a peer mentor who has taught on the traditional college level. The maximum number of faculty in a faculty group is ten. The minimum number is three.

NOTE: Throughout this application, the term "faculty group" should be viewed as generally synonymous with the terms "faculty-school college", "college", "microcollege", and "school". At times, "faculty group" may be used to emphasize the personal duties of the individual members of the teaching core of the college, and "microcollege", "college", or "school" may be used to emphasize the holistic function or identity of the school.

Faculty Handbook

A faculty handbook is a document in which is listed pertinent information that the faculty member needs in order to understand his or her part in how the faculty school operates. Especially important is the information pertaining to matters that can block a faculty member's participation in the school's operation. These matters include non-negotiable rules of conduct and terms of employment. Faculty handbooks must be made available to the faculty members.

Faculty-School College

A faculty-school college is the school formed by a faculty group of at least three faculty members and at least three members on a Board of Advisors. It typically offers only one degree in the humanities or related fields and is extensively and radically streamlined to eliminate costs by eliminating traditional facilities and ancillary personnel. The faculty members run the faculty-school college and stand in direct reception of students' tuition. The three principle parts of a faculty-school college are the faculty members, the faculty director, and the college's advisory board. Other requirements exist, which will be discussed below, for the faculty-school college to become accredited through OLEF.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Gap Credit

Gap credit is credit earned through what is commonly known as a “gap year”, or the year between a senior’s graduation from high school and his or her official enrollment as a Freshman in a college program. The maximum number of credits earned as gap credits is 10, and the learning units must be approved by OLEF before the student begins work on those units.

Hours

Here the term “hours” refers to the actual clock-time duration of one live class period per week. A two-hour class, therefore, is expected to meet for two full clock hours a week. However, using the “time in/time out” ratio (see below), a two-hour class carries an outside-of-class work load of four clock hours per week. Consequently, the total clock hours a student invests in a two-hour class per week is six.

Humanities

The humanities are those disciplines that are initially engendered by reflection upon essentially human values and activities, and then serve to engender in the student deeper reflection upon these matters. Perennial questions of existence, value, knowledge, truth, God, eternity, time, selfhood, and beauty form the skeletal structure upon which various specific courses of the humanities are fleshed out. A non-exhaustive list of the disciplines of the humanities is the classics, language study, rhetoric, history, law, literature, music, drama, philosophy, religion, art, and so forth.

The OLEF accepts this use of the term, but broadens it to include those studies of the social sciences or business sciences that do not necessitate the use of technical or clinical equipment in the teaching process. Such studies include, but are not limited to, sociology, anthropology, psychology (non-clinical), education studies (but not necessarily vocational training), economics, entrepreneurship, finance, information studies, communication, and so forth.

Initial Accreditation

Initial accreditation is the status a faculty group holds after it has achieved OLEF accreditation but before it has renewed that accreditation. To achieve initial accreditation, a faculty group must complete the entire OLEF initial-accreditation application packet.

Job-Placement Orientation

A certificate or degree that has a job-placement orientation is required to post information about the job market or the job network that that faculty group is involved in. The program exists to enhance the student’s career opportunities.

Learning Units

A learning unit is any collection of study or work that when completed successfully confers credit upon the student. Examples of learning units are classes, portfolios, projects, blocks (travel blocks included), logs, and comprehensives. If a learning unit can be completed without direct interaction in a land classroom between a student and a teacher, then the credit is to be considered “online” credit and cannot be applied to the requirement that 5250% of all credits that constitute a degree or certificate must be delivered through land classes or practicum units.

Log

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

A log is a learning module consisting of a student's self-report that records periodic practice of a skill or life-habit pattern throughout a set period of time.

Major

A major area of study, or a "major", is any collection of learning units (the majority being classes) that are (1) connected to each other by a common academic subject, and (2) total at least 32 credits.

Master of Arts Degree

A Master of Arts degree ("MA") is a degree comprising a master thesis and at least 35 credits of discipline-specific units ("DSUs") beyond the Bachelor of Arts degree. An MA degree should not surpass 45 credits by much, if at all.

Master Thesis

A master thesis is an academic argument written as a developed draft of a professionally publishable version. The minimum length of a master thesis is 12,500 words, not including bibliographies. The master thesis is written by an MA candidate under the direction of a mentor and is part of the final requirements of an MA degree.

Minor

A minor area of study, or a "minor", is any collection of learning units that (1) are connected to each other by a common academic subject, and (2) total at least 18-24 credits.

Non-Reciprocal Assessment

Non-reciprocal assessment is a policy that ensures that an assessor evaluating a faculty group for accreditation can never later be evaluated for accreditation by a member of that same faculty group.

Program-Specific Unit

A program-specific unit (PSU) is any credit-earning unit associated with a specific program as opposed to general learning or to a general discipline. This is to accommodate faculty groups who have assigned a specific name to their program.

Project

A project is a learning module that awards credit for documented experience commenced and concluded during a space of time determined by the evaluator of the project.

Portfolio

A portfolio is a learning module that awards credit for a collection of assignments, documents, texts, or videos that provide evidence of the student's apprehension, retention, and mastery of specific concepts or data.

Public-Resource Research Portal

A public-resource research portal is any database or venue by which a student can access research material free of charge, the access being paid for by federal or state tax monies or being offered free of charge. Examples of this are public libraries (both the land holdings and the digital holdings available to card holders), public-library consortiums, on-site library computers of public colleges and universities, open-access online journal sites, and so forth.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Renewal Accreditation

Renewal accreditation is the status a faculty group holds after it has held OLEF initial accreditation for five years and has successfully demonstrated that the duties and requirements inherent in holding accreditation have been met. To achieve renewal accreditation, a faculty group must complete a renewal-accreditation application packet.

Self-Enrichment Orientation

A certificate or degree that is has a self-enrichment orientation is not required to post information about the job market or the job network that that faculty group is involved in. The program exists solely for the enrichment of the student, not to enhance the student's career opportunities.

Self-Study

A self-study is the record of a faculty group's independent and internal design and evaluation of its structure, operations, relevancy, and efficiency. Here, a self-study for initial-accreditation purposes is a study that seeks to document a faculty group's alignment with the OLEF requirements for such accreditation.

Service Email

A service email is a stable email account that can be accessed by all members of the faculty group of a college. The address should be `service@facultygroupname.com` or the like (for example, `service@greatlakecollege.org`). The faculty members are to hold the password to this account in common. The address to this account should not change.

Student Handbook

A student handbook is a document in which is listed pertinent information that the student needs in order to understand his or her part in how the faculty school operates. Especially important is the information pertaining to matters that can block a student's participation in learning. These matters include non-negotiable rules of conduct and terms of tuition payment. Student handbooks must be made available to the students.

“Time In/Time Out” Ratio

The time in/time out ratio (or the “TI/TO”) of a class is the ratio of hours spent in class to the hours spent outside of class doing work for the class. That is, a 3-hour class with a TI/TO ratio of 1:2 will meet live for 3 clock hours but will require the students to do 6 hours of homework for that one class period.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

CORE VALUES

Autonomous Accreditation

In its essence, accreditation is a collection of individuals with credentials and experience specific to a profession taking upon themselves the responsibility of ensuring that people seeking to be admitted into that profession have the necessary credentials to be so admitted. Different accrediting bodies have different tier structures, but they are alike in that at the top tier, this responsibility is an autonomous assumption of duty. Ultimately, then, an accrediting body is guided by a top tier of personnel within itself that is beyond all accreditation except self-accreditation.

With this reasoning, the OLEF assumes the right to accredit those educational institutions it sees as fully complying in both letter and spirit with the requirements laid forth by the core assessors in the OLEF accrediting body, as long as that group of core assessors has the profession-specific credentials and experience necessary to do so in good faith.

Our insistence on being independent and autonomous leads us to bypass the opportunity to become a federally recognized accrediting agency. We feel that we must protect our ability to reject applicants that, while they may fit the letter of our requirements, do not ultimately fit the spirit. This is to say, we reserve the right to use the last step of the application process—the vote of the Executive Director's Council—to deny accreditation status to institutions that we think may ultimately provide training toward a lifestyle inimical to the life-guiding principles of wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth.

Financial Sustainability

We believe that emerging college graduates do not have to be, and should not have to be, financially burdened with student debt. Under the model of the faculty-school college, tuition can be adjusted so that the product (the collegiate education) is "paid in full" by the time the student needs to begin to use it in full. Therefore, the OLEF maintains very strong reserves against accrediting a faculty group that both requires more than 140 credits for a BA degree and charges more than a total of \$6,000 for those credits (the individual monetary weights of a credit can be determined by the faculty group). The absolute maximum cost for a BA of 120 to 140 credits is \$7,500. An MA degree consisting of 35 to 45 credits in addition to the BA requirement should not charge more than an additional \$2,000. The absolute maximum cost for a MA is \$2,500.

Our insistence upon financial sustainability is the second reason OLEF has decided against being recognized by the United States Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency. The first requirements of agencies so recognized is that they show that at least one of the institutions they accredit needs the accreditation status for participation for a loan program.

Dynamic Interaction

First, faculty groups accredited by the OLEF promote dynamic interaction by streamlining their lines of communication and decision. The elimination of most ancillary personnel and offices, along with the assumption of administration duties by the faculty themselves, creates an atmosphere in which concerns can be directly and immediately expressed between the involved parties, and action that seeks to address and remove those concerns can be quickly and

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

authoritatively agreed upon. With this goal in mind, the OLEF insists that one member of the faculty group become the group's director, that all other faculty have direct access to the director, that students have direct access to their faculty and to the director, and that the director is empowered to make on-the-spot decisions under the oversight of the school's board.

Second, dynamic interaction is fostered between teacher and student to a unique extent during non-mediated person-to-person discussion. One's recognition of an immediate presence of another person heightens a sense of importance, concern, responsibility, and value for the other person that should be present in our relationships. For this reason, at least 1/3 of all classes offered by a faculty group must be set up so that at least 2/3rds of the classroom time of these classes is non-mediated, local, and immediate in order for the faculty group to receive OLEF accreditation.

Invested Pedagogy

Many things can help teachers care about how, what, and who they teach. But few things can erode this care as quickly as a disconnect between the service a teacher renders and the perceived fairness of the amount of remuneration he or she receives for the service. Too little pay and the teacher may eventually feel that he or she has been exploited by the administration of the school, too much pay and the teacher may eventually feel that he or she is a partner in exploiting the students. Since often the teacher has little say over the salary, and often a balance between payment and service is not achieved, often teachers operate with the specter of exploitation in the room. For some, this specter produces an unhealthy reaction against being overworked, for others, an unhealthy focus on gaining even higher salaries for the same work or less.

To counter this, faculty groups accredited by OLEF must disclose a complete budget to any internal or external inquiry of a professional manner (this includes requests made by student groups or parents of students). Further, faculty groups must have in place mechanisms of payment that transfer tuition directly from the student to the faculty member or the faculty-member's immediate supervisor (the director). This directness of payment will allow the student a better chance at a refund if the call for a refund is legitimate. It is harder to charge exorbitant prices, to demand an illicit refund, or to deny a legitimate one when all the parties involved are in direct and personal contact with each other.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

ACCREDITATION STATUS

There are four ways a faculty group affiliated with the OLEF with respect to accreditation can refer to itself in the accreditation page of its (the college's) web site.

1) “Pursuant Accreditation”

At any point of its existence, a faculty group can place the phrase “Pursuant Accreditation through the OLEF” on the accreditation page of its web site. The purpose of this is to let the public know that the college is aware of its need for accreditation and is intent on achieving accreditation in time through the OLEF but must first establish itself as a solvent, self-sustaining operating entity. The college must first contact OLEF to make the current Executive Director aware of its decision to pursue accreditation.

2) “Application Pending”

At this stage, the faculty group has not only declared via email its intention to the Executive Director to pursue accreditation through the OLEF but has also completed and submitted its self-study report. In a mailed letter, the Executive Director asks that the school place the phrase “Application Pending for Accreditation from the OLEF” on the accreditation page of its web site. (See step 2 of the section “Initial Accreditation (Process Of)”.)

3) “Candidate for Accreditation”

Once the self-study has been completed by the college and accepted by the Executive Director, the school is notified in a mailed letter that it should place the phrase “Candidate for Accreditation from the OLEF” on its web site's accreditation page. (See step 3 of the section “Initial Accreditation (Process Of)”.)

4) “Fully Accredited”

Once all six steps of the initial-application process have been successfully completed by the faculty group (see the section “Initial Accreditation (Process Of)” below), the applicant receives full-accreditation status, good for five years. The Executive Director notifies the college by mailed letter and asks that it places the phrase “Fully Accredited by the OLEF” on the accreditation page of its web site.

OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges

SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES

This information is provided so that faculty groups seeking accreditation through the OLEF may determine how their college meets the requirements of each item listed below. The required length of the self-study is 1 year. The applicant must provide the Executive Director with a brief email progress report once a month for the duration of the self-study period, although this requirement may be waived in certain cases.

NOTE: The faculty group should first receive feedback from the foundation's Executive Director before it begins the self-study.

Identity of College

The faculty group should choose a name for the college that reflects properly upon the professional purpose of the group. Ideally, the name should reflect the collegiate nature of the institution. We suggest that if the term “college” is used in the name of the faculty group, then a quick explanation of the nature of the faculty group—its size, basic operational structure, and intent—should be given on the home page of the group's web site in order to quickly clear up matters of unintentional equivocation, as most people mainly think of the traditional, landed institution upon hearing the word “college”. We advocate for the use of the term “faculty-school college”, but its use at the discretion of the faculty group. Please refrain from using the word “university” in your name, as the scope of the connotation of this label readily leads one into misunderstanding the nature of the faculty-school college.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Institutional Statements

The faculty group must display a carefully worded mission statement toward the front of its student handbook, its faculty handbook, and on the home page of its web site. This statement is to be labeled “Mission Statement”. Furthermore, the faculty group must develop and display at least one substantial paragraph that articulates its basic philosophy of education. This section is to be labeled “Philosophy of Education”.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Legal Structure of Faculty Group

The faculty group must assume a business identity. The owner should decide whether he or she wants to list the group as a sole proprietorship, as a limited-liability corporation, or as a non-profit organization (this list does not exhaust the options of legal identification). The faculty group must then be registered with the home state's registry of businesses, and business taxes must be filled out annually after the filing of registration for as long as the business operates.

Typical Supporting Documents: a photocopy of the group's Certificate of Registration

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Material Structure of Faculty Group

A faculty group is made up of four parts: its board, its faculty members, its director, and its founder. The whole of its parts is the college. Land, buildings, and any other type of property do not form any constitutional part of the group's definition.

Board

A board is a body consisting of at least four members that exists to provide third-party oversight for the overall management of a college. For administrative purposes, a board is expected to have a board director, which can be so called or called by another name. At least one board member must be a member of the public, and at least two board members must be non-faculty. The board director can be the director of the faculty school.

Faculty

The faculty members are those involved mainly in designing and teaching units for the college. Faculty members must receive at least 80% of the tuition as payment for their services.

Director

Although the director can teach for the group, his or her primary function is to recruit students, locate classroom space, schedule classes, register students, manage the faculty, field complaints, and oversee financial management. The founder cannot receive more than 20% of the tuition as payment for his or her services.

Founder

The founder is the person who initiated the start-up of the faculty group. The idea of the group was initially his or hers, as was the majority of the effort and expenditure to bring the group into existence. Often, but not always, the director is the founder. For legal purposes, the founder should be defined as the one who is listed as the owner or principal partner of the faculty group qua business.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Operations of Faculty Group

The operations of the faculty group that concern OLEF accreditation are as follows:

Attendance Records

Faculty groups must keep attendance records of all classes. Students in all non-mediated classes (that is, in-person, land-based classes where students and teacher gather in the same physical locale) must physically attend, at the very minimum, 2/3rds of the total class time in order for the OLEF to archive that student's transcript. (At least 1/2 of all classes offered by a college must be non-mediated classes.)

Students in mediated classes (classes carried out mainly via video conferencing) must submit work in a timely fashion over the period of the class to ensure that they are giving themselves sufficient time to master the concepts of the class. Teachers must affirm that students have opened and "checked in" to an online class within the first two days of the class and that the students are regularly accessing the class.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

NOTE: Here and elsewhere, it should be remembered that the word “class” does not refer to all learning units in general but a specific type of learning unit. (Please refer to the opening glossary for a description of learning units in general.)

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Budget

The faculty group should have a close estimate of how much it expects to earn from student tuition per year, and from this number must allocate all operation costs. Faculty groups should not determine operation costs from a number derived from tuition plus estimated outside funding by way of donations or grants. While these outside monies may certainly be accepted by the faculty group, they should not be viewed as continual and sustained income.

The budget should cover such costs as faculty payments, estimated textbook costs (if the equivalent of the information in a textbook cannot be found online as open-access material), room-rentals, director’s payments, advertising expenses, travel expenses for students, and student short-term and long-term housing expenses, if such is to be required.

NOTE 1: It must be shown that a minimum of 80% of all tuition goes directly to the faculty in charge of delivering the instruction. There is to be no exception to this rule.

NOTE 2: It is to be expected that a student make an initial, one-time expenditure in order to acquire the computer equipment and/or Internet software necessary to engage in the learning units offered by a college. This expense should be moderate and should not be added to the school’s budget expenses.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application or a brief graph disclosing the budget

Buildings

Unless the building has been gifted to the faculty group or the use of which is being granted free of charge, faculty groups should avoid investing in a building as such endeavors raise overhead expenses and thus serve to drive up tuition costs. Rather, faculty groups should seek to meet in homes or small rooms rented on a per diem basis in the community.

Typical Supporting Documents: Copies of the rental contracts for all rented spaces

Conflict-Resolution Strategy

The faculty group must have a protocol in place that regulates the steps that must be taken in its dealing with complaints, potential litigation, and in-house conflict among members of the faculty group.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Core-Learning Assessment

Faculty groups must be able to articulate how the classes they designate as Core Learning classes (also referred to in this application as “General Learning” classes or units) fit the prescribed OLEF requirements. All such classes must involve the students with classical, Great Book, or primary texts selected from an historical perspective leading to an investigation of current or contemporary documents of the theme of the class. All core-learning classes must fit under at least four of these five basic categories, and it must be made clear how the collection of these classes represents an attempt by the school to engage in a fair spread across those four categories (that is, no one category is unduly predominant in a school’s class list):

- Philosophy/Science/Math
- Writing/Literature/Texts
- Civics/Culture/History
- Psychology/Health/Selfhood
- Business/Economics/Finance

Typical Supporting Documents: a typed list of the college’s core-learning or general-learning classes.

Course Syllabi

Every course offered by a faculty group should have a syllabus in which major assignments and course policies are outlined and a tentative schedule for the class is provided. The design and detail of the syllabi is left to the discretion of the faculty group or the individual teacher of the course.

Typical Supporting Documents: a sample syllabus from at least two faculty members

Entrance Exams

Faculty groups must use entrance exams in order to verify that students enrolling in any program beyond 16 credits are at least at the level of a graduated high-school senior. Faculty schools have to recognize ACT or SAT tests as fulfilling this requirement, but the score level at which they admit or reject is up to them. Faculty schools can also develop their own supplemental entrance exams as long as those exams meet with OLEF approval. If students do not have ACT or SAT scores, then they must take and pass the OLEF Preparatory Learning Examination.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

General Learning Classes (or Units)

See the NOTE at the term “Core Learning Units” in the “Terms” section above.

Grading

For articulation purposes, faculty should use a letter-grade system linked to a GPA number for assigning final grades in courses. In this system, an “A” is a 4, an “A-” is a 3.66, an “A/B” is a 3.5, a “B+” is a 3.33, a “B” is a 3, a “B-” is a 2.66, a “B/C” is a 2.5”, and so forth, ending in an “F” being 0 on an “A, B, C, D, F” range. How a final grade is to be earned in a class is to be left entirely to the specific faculty member teaching the

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

class. Faculty groups who are not interested in articulation are completely autonomous concerning how they want to deal with grades, even to the extent that grades can be relegated to a “Pass/Fail” system or eliminated altogether.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Hiring Faculty after Initial Accreditation

All faculty members that are hired after the college has achieved initial accreditation are to be hired by the director or founder. Vital identification documents of all new faculty will be examined by the OLEF assessor on his or her on-site visit during the Renewal Application process.

NOTE: Notice of new hires must be made in the school’s annual reports to the OLEF.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Internal Evaluation Procedure

Faculty groups must develop ways to determine the quality of their faculty’s training and abilities, of their responsibility of financial sustainability, and of their ability to meet the goals of their mission statement. These evaluation procedures should be carried out annually, and the results should be examined by all faculty-group members.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Meetings and Conferences

All members of the faculty groups should meet together in a plenary meeting at least once every twelve months, with the director presiding. Only members of the faculty group who live over 100 miles away from the locale of the meeting can miss these meetings. However, these off-site faculty members must receive a full-text recording or document of the meetings.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Public-Resource Portals

Public-Resource portals are those venues or tools that are available more or less free of charge via the Internet, on-site computers at local academic libraries, or the public-library systems. Faculty groups are strongly encouraged to make use of Internet tools available via Google, Skype, Jing, Camstudio, Vimeo, YouTube, and so forth. Ideally, all the essential functions of a professionally designed digital-education platform like Blackboard, Angel, or WebCT, to name a few, can be accomplished by these public-resource portals. The aim of a faculty group’s use of these public-resource portals is to lower tuition costs while still enjoying most of the amenities of a digital-education platform.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Publications

The following publications must be published on the web site as downloadable documents. It is recommended that they also be posted as HTML texts.

• Faculty Handbook

The faculty handbook should address matters of policy and operation. The faculty handbook must include a section on the rules of conduct for faculty members and the course of action the school will take in redressing the infraction of these rules.

Typical Supporting Documents: a copy of the faculty handbook

• Open Letters

Open letters are letters that, as a matter of course, are included in a student's enrollment package. These letters are important because they serve to help indemnify the faculty group as the group seeks to carry out its duties in its relations with the student. Every faculty group is expected to post at least three letters on its site:

- Expectation of Prompt Payment and the Refund Policy
- Expectation of Timely Completion of Coursework
- Disclosure of Accreditation and Articulation

Typical Supporting Documents: a copy of the letters

• Student Handbook

The student handbook should address matters of practical importance to the student's success at the college. The student handbook must include a section on the rules of conduct for students and the course of action the school will take in redressing the infraction of these rules.

Typical Supporting Documents: a copy of the student handbook

• Schedule of Classes or Coursework Units

The faculty group should list in one publication all classes and coursework units it intends to offer. A brief description of the aims and content of the class or coursework units must be placed alongside the title, as well as the number of credits of the class or units.

The title "Schedule of Classes" is the traditionally accepted title for this publication. However, this schedule must also list the titles, numbers, descriptions, and credits for each learning unit. Consequently, the faculty group must determine how to number units like comprehensives, projects, portfolios, and logs as well as classes, if the college is to use these other units.

Typical Supporting Documents: a copy of the schedule of classes

Student Evaluations

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Student evaluations fall under two categories:

- **In-House Evaluations**

For in-house evaluations, faculty groups must administer student evaluations in such a way that every active teacher is evaluated by every group of students he or she interacts with within the context of a learning unit. The design of these evaluations is up to the faculty group.

- **OLEF Student Evaluations**

These evaluations are evaluations designed by the OLEF for the purpose of ascertaining whether the learning unit and the teacher meet certain accreditation expectations. For example, these evaluations ask students to verify the identity of the teacher, the adequacy of instruction and feedback, the location of instruction, and the length of instruction, among other things. Students must fill out these evaluations and mail them directly to the OLEF.

Typical Supporting Documents: a copy of the two types of evaluations

Teach-Outs

If a faculty group decides to disband, it may immediately stop enrolling students but either must allow the current group of students to finish the degree program (which may entail an close-down period of up to four years) or negotiate the complete transfer of both credit and enrollment of its current students to a similar faculty group within 100 miles of its (the disbanding faculty group) present location.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application

Teaching Sites

All teaching sites should be clean, safe, finished (in terms of construction), and clear of pathogens and allergens. Schematics of fire-escape paths from the teaching site to the outside of the building must be posted if such pathways are not obvious. All teaching sites must be in a setting conducive for learning. This is to say, the sites must be relatively private and mostly sound proof. Examples of acceptable sites are a faculty member's living room, den, or study; an enclosed room at a public library; or a room at a city hall or a church. Examples of unacceptable sites are tables at restaurants or coffee houses, open tables at libraries, an unfinished basement or room, or a faculty member's bedroom or intimate space.

NOTE: Faculty groups must consider carefully the possible ramifications of allowing classes in faculty members' homes before deciding whether or not to allow this space to be used this way.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application and photos or videos of the interiors and exteriors of the meeting spaces

Transcripts

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

The faculty group must permanently record and archive students' transcripts and must send redundant copies of all transcripts to OLEF on an annual basis. Furthermore, at least one electronic copy of all grades the faculty group has issued must be updated yearly and then stored in a safety deposit box at the faculty group's bank.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application and a sample transcript

Web Site

The faculty group must develop and maintain a web site with a .com or .org domain name. While the site does not have to be elaborate or complicated, it does have to look professional, and all links must be functioning. The site must have the following information posted (the public posting of other material required for accreditation per this manual is not necessary).

- **Academic Calendars**

Calendars for the current year and the next two should be posted on the web site, with all dates that are important for the students to know.

- **Admission Policies, including Entrance Exams**

All prerequisites for admission, as well as a downloadable admissions form, must be provided on the web site. If entrance exams are required, then a practice exam should be available for download. Furthermore, the cost of the examination should be listed, as well as proctoring requirements, if any.

- **Current and Extended Schedule of Classes**

Students should be able to see on the web site what specific classes are in session for the current term and which ones are coming up for the immediately succeeding term. Also, students need to be able to access a general program plan that outlines the course of the whole degree.

- **Disclosure of Accreditation**

A statement disclosing accreditation status must be posted somewhere on the faculty group's web site. A link to the OLEF must be provided.

- **Disclosure of Fees and Refund Policies**

Tuition costs for each year of study must be disclosed. Total costs per year (for example, travel, room, and board costs for any units involving a required trip; rental expenses for housing if on-site boarding is required, and so forth) should be estimated as closely as possible, within reason. Refund policies should be carefully and clearly explained.

- **Disclosure of Viability of Degree(s) Offered**

The faculty group must make clear the hiring rate of graduates from similar degree programs. If the faculty group is justifying its offering of a degree program on grounds of principle as opposed to practicality in earning a living, this stance must be articulated. Students should have some idea, based on national averages, of how hard it may be to land a job with the degree they will earn, or whether the

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

degree offered is even designed by the faculty group with such a career path in mind.

- **Downloadable Version of Student Handbook**

The student handbook should be made available for download from the faculty group's web site.

- **Enrollment and Class-Registration Process**

The way to enroll in the faculty group's program should be fully articulated on the group's web site, as well as the way to register for specific classes.

- **Faculty Profiles and Contact Information**

All faculty members should have a recent photo posted by a description of their own education and experience. Resumes or Curriculum Vitae should be linked to the profiles. A current email address must be provided for each faculty member.

- **Links to Public-Resource Portals**

The faculty group should use open-access online research tools along with the public library, or the public-library consortium, located in the faculty group's city. For the most part, these tools and materials should be made available free of any substantial charge to the student. Explanations for how to use the library network and the social-media tools like Facebook, blogs, Skype (for conference videos), and Vimeo or YouTube (for posting of video lectures), to name a few, should be posted on the web site.

- **Mission Statement of Faculty Group**

On a prominent spot in the college's home page of its web site, the faculty group's mission statement must be displayed.

- **Overview of Degree Requirements**

Absolutely all requirements (that is, required units) for accumulating the total number of credits to earn the degree offered must be listed on the faculty group's web page.

- **Third-Party-Merchant Payment Portals**

In order to keep their web sites free from sensitive consumer credit data, faculty groups must use third-party-merchant payment portals like, but not limited to, PayPal or Google Checkout.

Typical Supporting Documents: a written response as an answer to a question in the application and the provision of the URL address on the Initial-Application Cover Page

OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges

INITIAL ACCREDITATION (PROCESS OF)

Step 1 of Initial Accreditation

A faculty representative of the college wishing to acquire OLEF accreditation (henceforth, "the applicant") emails the current OLEF's Executive Director to declare the group's intention to initiate the process. The email affirms that the college has been in operation for at least two consecutive years and is solvent. The goals, programs, and mission statement of the college are briefly described in the email.

Step 2 of Initial Accreditation

Comparing this information with the scope and purpose of the OLEF, the Executive Director determines whether or not the applicant should continue with the application process. Applicants whose applications are approved for evaluation are mailed a letter from the Executive Director notifying them of this decision and are encouraged to place the phrase "Application Pending for Accreditation from the OLEF" on the accreditation page of their school's web site.

Applicants who do not fit the scope and purpose of OLEF are given detailed reasons as to how and why this decision to suspend the application was made and are supplied with suggested revisions to their structure or mode of operation if OLEF accreditation is still to be pursued by the faculty group.

Step 3 of Initial Accreditation

The faculty group conducts a one-year self-study based on the guidelines of this manual. The group assiduously tracks its compliance with the accreditation requirements and collects the necessary verifying documents and data. The group completes the official application packet with ancillary supporting documents and mails the material to the Executive Director. Once the Executive Director receives this material and accepts it for evaluation, the group is notified via postal mail that it should place the phrase "Candidate for Accreditation from the OLEF" on their web site's accreditation page. If something of the pack is amiss, however, then the Executive Director provides extensive written feedback and advice to the applicant on how the matter can be amended.

NOTE: The self-study year can be completed by the faculty group before the group contacts the Executive Director to notify the OLEF of its intent (see step 1, above). However, such preparatory investment does not guarantee that the group's application will be immediately accepted for evaluation. If the group's application is not accepted for evaluation, then the group will have to engage in a new self-study for another year.

Step 4 of Initial Accreditation

The Executive Director and at least one level-3 or level-4 assessor evaluate the application pack. Both have to agree to approve the application. The Executive Director then fills out a Recommendation for Approval form and distributes the form, the anonymous material of the application pack, and any necessary accompanying data to two level-2 assessors and one level-1 assessor, two of which must agree with and sign the Recommendation for Approval form.

Assessor levels are as follows:

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

Level-1 Assessor

A professionally employed or retired member of the public who understands and supports the goals of the OLEF.

Level-2 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college, college, or university for at least 2 years.

Level-3 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college, college, or university for at least 5 years.

Level-4 Assessor

A person who has been on the faculty of a college, college or university for at least 10 years, or a person who has been on the faculty of a traditional college or university for at least 5 years and who has been the chair or coordinator of a traditionally structured academic department of the humanities for at least 1 year.

Step 5 of Initial Accreditation

The Executive Director or a level-4 assessor goes on a site visit to verify the identities of the faculty and to examine the classroom spaces. During this visit, travel expenses are itemized and directly reimbursed by the faculty group.

Step 6 of Initial Accreditation

After the site visit, the Executive Director and two other assessors from the level-3 or level 4 tiers hold a final vote on whether or not the faculty group should receive OLEF accreditation. This group of three is called the “Executive Director’s Council”, and it is only this council’s final vote that determines whether or not the applicant is awarded OLEF accreditation. The college is awarded accreditation if at least two of the three votes are in favor of awarding the accreditation. The Executive Director mails the college’s Accreditation Certificate to the school’s director.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

RENEWAL ACCREDITATION (PROCESS OF)

Step 1 of Renewal Accreditation

Colleges are accredited for 5 years and must apply for renewal of accreditation no later than the first month of the fifth year of their current accredited term. An email is sent to the OLEF Executive Director expressing interest in renewing accreditation. The faculty group spends six months of the last year of their 5-year accredited term conducting an internal study to compile evidence of their compliance with OLEF-accreditation requirements over the five years that they have held OLEF accreditation. This information is mailed to the Executive Director for examination. If the material is satisfactory, then the Executive Director immediately proceeds with Step 2. If the material is lacking or unsatisfactory, the Executive Director works with the faculty group until the material is satisfactory and then proceeds with Step 2.

Step 2 of Renewal Accreditation

The Executive Director or a level-4 assessor goes on a site visit to re-verify the identities of the faculty, to re-examine the classroom spaces, and to talk with students to see if accreditation standards have been upheld in the classroom. Travel expenses are itemized and directly reimbursed by the faculty group. If there has been no substantial change to the character, mission, and logistics of the faculty group since it first received accreditation, a certificate of continued accreditation valid for five years is issued by the Executive Director or level-4 assessor to the faculty group. If, however, substantial change has occurred, then while on the same site visit, the Executive Director or level-4 assessor articulates in writing his or her understanding of the changes and has the faculty group affirm by signature that the document properly represents these changes. The process of renewing application then proceeds to Step 3.

Step 3 of Renewal Accreditation

After the site visit, the Executive Director or the level-4 assessor who went on the site visit and two other assessors from the level-4 or level-3 tier examine the statement of substantial changes in the faculty group seeking renewal of accreditation. They hold a final vote on whether or not the faculty group should receive renewal accreditation. The faculty group is awarded renewal of accreditation for 5 years if at least three of the four votes are in favor of awarding the renewal. However, if two or more of the four votes are for discontinuing accreditation, then the faculty group is denied renewal but, if it so wishes, is granted a period of 2 years to realign itself with the core values of OLEF accreditation. During these 2 years, the faculty group holds "candidacy accreditation" status. After two years, the process of reinstating the faculty group begins at Step 1 of Renewal Accreditation.

**OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges**

FEES AND DUES

Cost for Applying for and Receiving Initial Application

\$50 for the Executive Director's work leading up to Step 5 of the Initial-Accreditation process: \$50

\$30 for each assessor (not including the Executive Director) examining the application pack, prior to an on-site visit: \$150

\$100 for the Executive Director or level-4 assessor involved with the on-site visit: \$100

Reimbursement of travel for the Executive Director or the level-4 assessor involved with the on-site visit (airfare, car rental, gas, lodging, meals): not to exceed \$500

\$30 for each assessor involved with the final vote: \$90

Sum of costs listed (assuming full travel expenses): \$890

NOTE 1: We will not refund payments if an application is rejected along any steps of the accreditation process. However, we will make every effort to see that this does not happen by rigorously examining the application pack, ancillary documents (like photos of classrooms, official transcripts of faculty members, etc.), and working at a distance with applicants if revision or resubmission of application material is necessary before an on-site visit so that, barring an unforeseen surprise during the on-site visit, we can be very strongly persuaded that accreditation will happen before we commence with the on-site visit.

NOTE 2: We will do our best to keep travel expenses to an absolute minimum, within reason. The cost ultimately depends upon the distance between the OLEF, in Maryville, TN, and the locale of the faculty group.

Cost for Applying for and Receiving Renewal Accreditation

\$50 for the Executive Director's examination of the recent internal-study report: \$50

Reimbursement of travel for the Executive Director or the level-4 assessor involved in the on-site visit (airfare, car rental, gas, lodging, meals): not to exceed \$500

If necessary, \$30 for each assessor examining the changes in the faculty group and casting the final vote: \$90

Maximum total cost: \$550 (or \$640 if assessors need to review changes)

NOTE 1: We will not refund payments if an application is rejected along any steps of the process to renew accreditation. However, we will make every effort to see that this does not happen by

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

rigorously examining the internal study and working at a distance with applicants if revision or resubmission of this material is necessary before the on-site visit so that, barring an unforeseen surprise during the on-site visit, we can be very strongly persuaded that accreditation will be renewed before we commence with the on-site visit.

NOTE 2: We will do our best to keep travel expenses to an absolute minimum, within reason. The cost ultimately depends upon the distance between the OLEF, in Cuyahoga Falls, OH, and the locale of the faculty group.

Annual Accreditation Dues

\$125 per student, to be paid by the student directly to OLEF via the payment portal on OLEF's web site.

OLEF Accreditation Manual For Faculty-School Colleges

ANNUAL REPORTS

Required Annual Submission

The director of a faculty group must submit as a printable document (email or printed letter) a suitable declaration and explanation of all substantial material or missional changes made to college's structure annually once the faculty group has achieved accreditation, excepting the years on which the faculty group applies for initial or renewal accreditation.

Report Design

The format and design of this annual report is up to the college's director and can take the form of paragraphs or lists. The annual report must be signed by the college's director and at least one member of the school's board. It should be addressed to the current OLEF Executive Director and must be received by the annual-report deadline disclosed on the faculty group's certificate of accreditation.

Key Data

The report must make a good-faith attempt to disclose all changes that, were they in place at the time of the faculty group's application for accreditation, would have had to be included in the application.

Some examples of the data to be included in annual reports are as follows:

- CVs or resumes of new faculty members, along with a photo
- Official transcripts of new faculty members
- Photos or videos of the interiors and exteriors of new classroom spaces
- Descriptions of new programs
- Descriptions of budget changes, included new major and recurring expenses
- Descriptions of the changes or the school's mission or philosophy of education
- Major changes to the enrollment policy

OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges

INFRACTION POLICY

Basic Amendment Protocol

In general, the case of an accredited faculty school's infraction of one or more of the parts of the accreditation code is viewed by the OLEF as unique to the school. In our process to ascertain and understand the nature of the alleged infraction, we will follow these broad principles:

- Acquire as much data about the issue in order to determine whether an alleged infraction is actual.
- Use the Executive Director's Council to examine the data to determine whether an alleged infraction is actual or not.
- If the infraction is actual, seek to understand why the infraction was committed.
- Require realistic amendments under realistic deadlines.
- Work to help the faculty group install the amendments.
- If possible, do nothing to undercut the school's public standing.

Rescinding Accreditation

If in six months of receiving notice from the Executive Director's Council that an infraction has taken place no progress is made no progress is made by the faculty group, then under the guidance of the co-chairs of the board of the OLEF and the Executive Director's Council, the Executive Director (1) sends a mailed and emailed notice of the pending action of rescinding accreditation, (2) waits for thirty days to receive a response to the notice, (3) if no adequate response is received, rescinds accreditation via a written and emailed notice of revocation.

OLEF Accreditation Manual
For Faculty-School Colleges

APPLICATION FORM

It is recommended that the following applications be printed out on only the front side of the printed pages in order to preserve the format that best suits the submission of the applications. No intentionally blank pages have been placed in these documents. As a result, printing “front and back” will cause some material that is designed to be on a separate, removable sheet (in order to keep it from being distributed) to be included as a recto or verso of a page containing material that is to be collated and distributed.

Initial Accreditation

All pages of the Initial-Accreditation application must be completed and mailed to the current OLEF Executive Director. The inclusive page range is from the cover sheet labeled “Initial Accreditation Cover Sheet” to the last page labeled “End of Initial-Accreditation Application.” On our web site, this application is also available as a MS Word document to facilitate typing (MS Word printouts will be checked against the posted PDF version). Ancillary verification documents are to be submitted with the application in the media form best suited for the documentation (DVD, CD, USB drive, video card, paper printout, etc.).

Renewal Accreditation

All pages of the Renewal Accreditation application must be completed and mailed to the current OLEF Executive Director. The inclusive page range is from the cover sheet labeled “Renewal Accreditation Cover Sheet” to the last page labeled “End of Renewal-Accreditation Application.” On our web site, this application is also available as a MS Word document to facilitate typing (MS Word printouts will be checked against the posted PDF version). Ancillary verification documents are to be submitted along with the application in the media form best suited for the documentation (DVD, CD, USB drive, video card, paper printout, etc.).

NOTE: The Renewal-Accreditation application is essentially the same as the Initial-Accreditation application but is labeled differently in order to ensure that it is assessed via a streamlined process. It is recommended that the applicant keep the responses of the Initial-Accreditation application stored on a computer file so that the responses can be revised or expanded according to how the school changes over the years and then re-entered as responses to the questions of the Renewal-Accreditation application. It is still important, however, that the identity of the school, of its faculty group and board members, and of its location remain anonymous throughout the renewal application (excepting cover pages and agreement sheets), as a blind examination of the renewal application may be required in some cases.

INITIAL-ACCREDITATION APPLICATION

Initial-Accreditation Cover Page

This part of the application may be typed or handwritten (please neatly print in black ink). Only one paper copy of this cover page needs to be included in the application packet.

Date:

Name of person completing application:

Name of faculty group:

Names of faculty-group's members:

Names of board members of faculty group:

Postal address of faculty group:

Email address for director of faculty group:

URL address for the school's web site:

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT AFTER THIS PAGE, NO NAMES CAN BE USED IN THE APPLICATION. DO NOT PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY REVEAL TO THE ASSESSOR(S) WHO THE FACULTY-GROUP MEMBERS ARE, WHAT THE FACULTY GROUP IS CALLED, AND WHERE THE FACULTY GROUP IS SITUATED.

When completed, this application and all ancillary verification documents, along with the necessary copies of this material, are to be mailed in one postal package to the following address:

**Open Latch Education Foundation
Attn: Executive Director
1242 North Wyngate Way
Maryville, TN 37803**

This part of the application may be typed or handwritten (please neatly print in black ink). This part of the application must be included in the packet in triplicate paper copies. NOTE: These responses can be classified as “typical supporting documents”.

Please answer Yes, No, or NA for “Not Applicable”. (It is to be understood that “All faculty groups” means “All faculty groups that are to be accredited by the OLEF.”)

_____ 1. All faculty groups must have a name. Does this faculty group have a name?

_____ 2. All faculty groups must have a web site. Does this faculty group have a web site?

_____ 3. All faculty groups must have a mission statement. Does this faculty group have a mission statement?

_____ 4. All faculty groups must have an articulated philosophy of education. Does this faculty group have an articulated philosophy of education?

_____ 5. All faculty groups must have a registered legal identity. Does this faculty group have a registered legal identity?

_____ 6. All faculty groups must have a board. The board must be made up of at least 3 individuals that are not also faculty members. Does this faculty group have such a board?

_____ 7. All faculty groups must have a director, a co-director, and an assistant co-director. Does this faculty group have a director, a co-director, and an assistant co-director?

_____ 8. Have all faculty members who are not the director verbally disclosed to the director their citizenship status?

_____ 9. Have all faculty members who are not the director verbally disclosed to the director whether or not they have been convicted for a felony under any country’s legal system?

_____ 10. Have all faculty members who are not the director verbally disclosed to the director any condition, mental or physical, that may make them unfit to serve as a member of the faculty group?

_____ 11. Has the director verbally disclosed to at least one other member of the faculty group his or her citizenship status?

_____ 12. Has the director verbally disclosed to at least one other member of the faculty group whether or not he or she has been convicted for a felony under any country’s legal system?

_____ 13. Has the director verbally disclosed to at least one other member of the faculty group any condition, mental or physical, that may make him or her unfit to serve as a director of the faculty group?

_____ 14. The minimum number of members of a faculty group is 3, and the maximum is 10. Does this faculty group have at least 3, but no more than 10, faculty members?

_____ 15. Any faculty school offering a certificate or degree must use land-based classes to deliver a minimum of half of the credits constituting the certificate or degree. Does your faculty school comply with this requirement?

_____ 16. Faculty teaching classes must take attendance. The absolute minimum amount that a student must attend in order for the OLEF to agree to archive his or her grade for the class is 2/3rds of the total time that the class meets cumulatively. Does your faculty group agree to abide by this stipulation and to keep records accordingly?

_____ 17. Faculty groups must have an approved written budget for an operating year. Does this faculty group have a written budget approved by the faculty group?

_____ 18. At this time, the maximum allowable total cost for a AA degree (120-140 credits) is set by the OLEF at \$15000. By “total” cost, we mean tuition, textbooks, and reasonable group-housing costs (if students are expected to reside on-site, this housing cost should include room and board). A reasonable average of one typical student’s expected expenses during the course of acquiring the degree can be used to compute the estimate asked for here. Can the applicant assure the OLEF that the total cost for a BA degree from this faculty group can be figured at or under \$15,000?

_____ 19. At this time, the maximum allowable total cost for a BA degree (120-140 credits) is set by the OLEF at \$15,000. By “total” cost, we mean tuition, textbooks, and reasonable group-housing costs (if students are expected to reside on-site, this housing cost should include room and board). A reasonable average of one typical student’s expected expenses during the course of acquiring the degree can be used to compute the estimate asked for here. Can the applicant assure the OLEF that the total cost for a BA degree from this faculty group can be figured at or under \$15,000?

_____ 20. At this time, the maximum total cost for an MA degree (ranging from 35 to 55 credits beyond the BA) is set by the OLEF at \$6000. By “total” cost, we mean tuition, travel, textbooks, special computer equipment, and reasonable group-housing costs (if students are expected to reside on-site, this housing cost should include room and board). A reasonable average of one typical student’s expected expenses during the course of acquiring the degree can be used to compute the estimate asked for here. Can the applicant assure the OLEF that the total cost for an MA degree from this faculty group be figured at or under \$6000? (If yes, place “Y” in the next question.)

_____ 21. At this time, the maximum total cost for a DA or PhD doctoral degree (ranging from 120 to 150 hours) is set by the OLEF at \$12,000. By “total” cost, we mean tuition, travel, textbooks, special computer equipment, and reasonable group-housing costs (if students are expected to reside on-site, this housing cost should include room and board). A reasonable average of one typical student’s expected expenses during the course of acquiring the degree can be used to compute the estimate asked for here. Can the applicant

assure the OLEF that the total cost for a doctoral degree from this faculty group be figured at or under \$12,000?

_____ 22. Faculty groups must publish on their web site the status of their accreditation. Does this faculty group have such a statement on its web site?

_____ 23. Faculty groups must have a written faculty handbook, a written student handbook, and a written schedule of classes. Does this faculty group have a written faculty handbook, a written student handbook, and a written schedule of classes or program guide?

_____ 24. The above mentioned publications (see Question 23) must be available as downloadable documents from the faculty group's web site. Are the documents available for download from the applicant's web site?

_____ 25. The current prices for learning units must be posted on the faculty group's web site. Are the current prices posted for your faculty group?

_____ 26. The current refund policy of the faculty group must be articulated fully on the faculty group's web site. Is your current refund policy posted?

_____ 27. If there is a timetable students are expected to follow to acquire a degree from your group's college, the timeline must be posted on the school's web site. Is your timetable articulated and posted on your school's web site?

_____ 28. Faculty groups are required to use student evaluations in order to gauge the views of the students concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of the individual classes and the faculty teaching those classes. Does your faculty group have such a system of administering, assessing, and archiving such evaluations in place?

_____ 29. Faculty groups must maintain student transcripts that reflect the current GPA of the student and the particular classes the student has taken to date. Furthermore, these transcripts must be made available to parties that have student permission to receive the transcripts. Does your faculty group meet these requirements?

_____ 30. General academic calendars for the current school year and the subsequent two must be posted on a faculty group's web site. Are these calendars published on your website?

_____ 31. An academic calendar of a minimum of two years must be posted on a faculty group's web site. Is this calendar published on your website?

_____ 32. All prerequisites for enrollment and admission, as well as a downloadable admissions form, must be provided on the web site. If entrance exams are required, then a practice exam should be available for download. Furthermore, the cost of the examination should be listed, as well as proctoring requirements. Are these requirements met by your web site?

_____ 33. The faculty group must make clear whether a degree they are offering is job-placement oriented or self-enrichment oriented. Are these terms used in in the certificate or degree descriptions?

_____ 34. The way to register for classes offered by the college should be fully articulated on the school's web site. Is the process for registration fully explained on your faculty group's web site?

_____ 35. On the school's web site, all faculty members should have a recent photo posted by a description of their own education and experience. A current email address must be provided for each faculty member. Are these requirements met by your faculty group's web site?

_____ 36. The school's web sites must have a way for students to request third-party mediation in a situation of conflict between a student and his or her current teacher or his or her current classmate(s). Does your faculty group's web site have a way for a student to do this?

_____ 37. The faculty group should use open-access online research tools along with the public library, or the public-library consortium, located in the faculty group's city. For the most part, these tools and materials should be made available free of any substantial charge to the student. Explanations for how to use the library network and the social-media tools like Facebook, blogs, Skype (for conference videos), and Vimeo or YouTube (for posting of video lectures), to name a few, should be posted on the web site. Does your faculty group web site address these matters?

_____ 38. Absolutely all requirements (that is, required learning units) for accumulating the total number of credits to earn the degree(s) offered by the college must be listed on the school's web page. Does your faculty group publicly list such requirements on its web page?

_____ 39. In order to keep their web sites free from sensitive consumer credit data, faculty groups must use third-party-merchant payment portals like, but not limited to, PayPal or Google Checkout. Does your faculty group accept payment only through third-party-merchant payment?

_____ 40. Please verify with a "Yes" answer: "I affirm that my responses to these 39 questions are formed in good faith and are true."

See next page. →

This part of the application **must** be typed.

You may download this application as a Word document and type the answers directly below the questions, expanding the allotted space according to the length of your answers, or you can type your answers on a new, blank document, retyping the questions in bold and positioning them at the lead of the answers. In order for our convenience in reading your responses, we ask that your answers be in a non-bold, regularly sized font.

This part of the application must be included in the application packet in **triplicate paper copies**. NOTE: These responses can be classified as “typical supporting documents”.

NO NAMES CAN BE USED IN THE APPLICATION. DO NOT PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY REVEAL TO THE ASSESSOR(S) WHO THE FACULTY-GROUP MEMBERS ARE, WHAT THE FACULTY GROUP IS CALLED, AND WHERE THE FACULTY GROUP IS SITUATED.

- 41. Please describe your purpose for the school that is formed by your faculty group. Why did you form this school? What need do you sense it will fill?**
- 42. Please describe your vision for the school. What is its mission statement? What is its philosophy of education? Where do you see it in 5 years? In 10 years? (Please refrain from disclosing any specific geographic or eponymous information that may reveal the school’s identity.)**
- 43. Please describe the degree your school offers. What is the degree name? Is it job-placement oriented or self-enrichment oriented? How many total credits does the degree require? How many degree-specific credits? Is this a degree unique to your school or do other schools offer this degree, too? (If your school offers more than one degree, please treat each degree separately here, preferably allotting one paragraph to each degree.)**
- 44. Please describe the grading system your school uses. Is there an overall system, that is, a system that determines how grades are entered into transcripts? If so, can faculty members design their own grading systems per class but then translate the class grades into transcript grades?**
- 45. Please describe how your school develops transcripts, how it archives them, how it backs the archives up, and how it provides copies of transcripts to outside parties.**
- 46. Please describe how your school conducts internal evaluations. These evaluations can include, but are not limited to, fiscal responsibility, pedagogy effectiveness, ethical behavior, morale issues, and the quality of space and facilities.**
- 47. Please describe how the school is prepared to handle a sudden loss of its director.**
- 48. Please describe the function of your school’s board.**
- 49. Please describe in what way and how often faculty members, along with the director, meet to discuss the operations of the school.**

- 50. Please describe how the school handles complaints from students, parents, or other outside parties. Describe the conflict-resolution process your school has in place.**
- 51. Please describe how the school maintains its web site. If there is only one web master, please explain how your school is prepared to handle a sudden loss of this person.**
- 52. If your school uses a GAP year or accepts GAP-year credits from an outside instructor or another school, please describe how assessment is made to determine the quality of the credits earned in the GAP year. If you do not use or accept GAP-year credits, please answer this question with “NA” or “Not Applicable”.**
- 53. Please describe how you would go about closing the school if you had to permanently shut it down (suppose the start of the close-down process was in one month). How long would the process take? What would you do with the current students?**
- 54. Please describe how you advertise or market the school?**
- 55. Please describe your teaching sites. Where are they? What are they? Who owns them? How do you pay for these sites? Are these sites adequate for any technology you may wish to incorporate in your classes? Have you received any complaints from students about volume issues, possible allergenic issues, lighting issues, or safety conditions?**
- 56. Please describe the “chain of command of your school in terms of relegating activity and directing activity?**
- 57. Please describe how the tuition from a typical non-mediated class makes its way into and through the faculty group. For example, for x dollars that a student pays to take the class, what percentage does the teacher get? What percentage does the director get? What percentage is allocated to other expenses or accounts (like advertising, or travel, or housing, etc.)?**
- 58. Please describe how the tuition from a typical mediated (that is, video-conference or online) class makes its way into and through the faculty group. For example, for x dollars that a student pays to take the class, what percentage does the teacher get? What percentage does the director get? What percentage is allocated to other expenses or accounts (like advertising, or travel, or housing, etc.)?**
- 59. Please describe how the tuition from a typical learning unit that is not a class makes its way into and through the faculty group. (Such units are typically projects, portfolios, logs, and comps.) For example, for x dollars that a student pays to submit a project, what percentage does the evaluator get? What percentage does the director get? What percentage is allocated to other expenses or accounts (like advertising, or travel, or housing, etc.)?**
- 60. Please describe, generally and briefly, the overall budget for one year of normal school operations. You may provide a chart or graph if you wish.**

61. Please describe how the director and/or board hires faculty members. What are the minimum qualifications? What sort of documented achievements or experience can stand in the place of an earned formal education?

ANCILLARY DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

The following items must be included in the application packet. Only one copy of each item is necessary, and this copy can take the form of whatever media type is best suited to record the information. Common media types include DVDs, CDs, USB drives, video cards, paper copies, etc. It is recommended that printed paper copies be used when possible.

Please check off each item that you have included in the application packet. Only one paper copy of this checklist needs to be included in the application packet. NOTE: These items can be classified as “typical supporting documents”.

Ancillary Documents

- _____ A copy of this faculty group’s Student Handbook
- _____ A copy of this faculty group’s Faculty Handbook
- _____ A copy of all Open Letters sent to enrolling students
- _____ A copy of the school’s Schedule of Classes
- _____ Photos or videos of the interiors of all the rooms on-site classes use
- _____ Photos or videos of the exteriors of all the buildings housing the above-mentioned rooms
- _____ CVs or Resumes of all faculty members involved with the faculty group
- _____ Official transcripts of all faculty members
- _____ A sample syllabus from at least two faculty members of one class he or she teaches
- _____ A copy of the school’s Certificate of Registration as a business in the school’s home state
- _____ Copies of the rental contracts for the classroom spaces
- _____ A copy of the college’s most recent Tax Return forms
- _____ A typed list of the college’s core subjects (the CLUs)
- _____ A copy of a student transcript developed and maintained by the college
- _____ A copy of the student-evaluation form used by the college
- _____ A copy of the evaluation form faculty use to assess the college

DIRECTOR’S AGREEMENT SHEET

The director of the faculty group must sign these statements. This sheet will remain in the possession of the OLEF Executive Director and will not be disturbed with the application packet to the assessors.

Only one paper copy of the director’s agreement sheet needs to be included in the packet.

FACULTY-GROUP DIRECTOR

Please neatly print your name:

Please sign with your usual signature:

Please enter today’s date:

Agreement 1 “I agree to allow the OLEF Executive Director to examine copies of our bank account statements and of our third-party-merchant accounts, including the most recent activity of these accounts, upon his or her written request and explanation for the reasons of the request.”

(Signature)_____

Agreement 2 “I understand that if I or the board require a final grade for any learning unit offered by this faculty group, then this final grade must be redundantly archived by the OLEF. I must be prompt and accurate with providing the foundation with both paper and digital copies of the transcripts.”

(Signature)_____

Agreement 3 “I understand that if the annual dues are not punctually paid to the OLEF, the foundation reserves the right to begin the process of rescinding accreditation. I further understand that I will receive a notice of this decision as it is pending so that I can amend the situation if I desire to do so.”

(Signature)_____

Agreement 4 “I understand, approve of, and am willing to comply with the OLEF’s requirement that all substantial changes to the material, organizational, and missional structure of this faculty group after it achieves initial accreditation be recorded and submitted in an annual report to the OLEF. This includes CVs or Resumes of new hires.”

(Signature)_____

Agreement 5 “I understand that all the requirements of OLEF accreditation are legal and thus I will not hold the OLEF responsible to any legal infractions committed by this faculty group in its pursuit to gain this accreditation or in its continual efforts to maintain this accreditation.”

(Signature)_____

Agreement 6 “I understand that if asked, I must provide the OLEF with copies of the college’s most recent federal tax documents.”

(Signature)_____

FACULTY AGREEMENT SHEETS

At least 3 faculty members must sign these statements, including the director. Remember that a faculty group must have at least 3 faculty members but no more than 6. These sheets will remain in the possession of the OLEF Executive Director and will not be disturbed with the application packet to the assessors.

Only one paper copy of each faculty member's agreement sheet needs to be included in the packet.

FACULTY MEMBER 1

Please neatly print your name:

Please sign with your usual signature:

Please enter today's date:

Agreement 1 "I approve of the above answers (Nos. 1-60)."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 2 "I understand that for transcript purposes, the director and/or board has the right to require a final grade for any learning unit I teach, facilitate, or evaluate. I further understand that this final grade will be redundantly archived by the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 3 "I approve of the initial and annual fees and dues that the OLEF is requiring for the application and maintenance of accreditation through the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 4 "I understand, approve of, and am willing to comply with the OLEF's expectation that, upon this school's having held OLEF accreditation for at least two consecutive years, I occasionally serve as a blind, non-reciprocal and non-remunerated assessor to other application packets similar to this one."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 5 "I give permission to the OLEF to do a background search on me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 6 "I am willing to administer the OLEF evaluations directly to my students and to oversee their being sealed and mailed back to the foundation."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 7 "I grant permission to the OLEF to examine the grounds for any student or peer complaint registered with the foundation concerning me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 8 "In my presence, I will allow an OLEF representative to physically examine my birth certificate, my driver's license, and/or my social-security card."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 9 "I agree to provide the OLEF with a current photo of myself that may be used in the foundation's evaluation forms in assessing my work among students of this college."

(Signature) _____

FACULTY AGREEMENT SHEETS

At least 3 faculty members must sign these statements, including the director. Remember that a faculty group must have at least 2 faculty members but no more than 6. These sheets will remain in the possession of the OLEF Executive Director and will not be disturbed with the application packet to the assessors.

Only one paper copy of each faculty member's agreement sheet needs to be included in the packet.

FACULTY MEMBER 2

Please neatly print your name:

Please sign with your usual signature:

Please enter today's date:

Agreement 1 "I approve of the above answers (Nos. 1-60)."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 2 "I understand that for transcript purposes, the director and/or board has the right to require a final grade for any learning unit I teach, facilitate, or evaluate. I further understand that this final grade will be redundantly archived by the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 3 "I approve of the initial and annual fees and dues that the OLEF is requiring for the application and maintenance of accreditation through the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 4 "I understand, approve of, and am willing to comply with the OLEF's expectation that, upon this school's having held OLEF accreditation for at least two consecutive years, I occasionally serve as a blind, non-reciprocal and non-remunerated assessor to other application packets similar to this one."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 5 "I give permission to the OLEF to do a background search on me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 6 "I am willing to administer the OLEF evaluations directly to my students and to oversee their being sealed and mailed back to the foundation."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 7 "I grant permission to the OLEF to examine the grounds for any student or peer complaint registered with the foundation concerning me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 8 "In my presence, I will allow an OLEF representative to physically examine my birth certificate, my driver's license, and/or my social-security card."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 9 "I agree to provide the OLEF with a current photo of myself that may be used in the foundation's evaluation forms in assessing my work among students of this college."

(Signature) _____

FACULTY AGREEMENT SHEETS

All members of the group must sign these statements, including the director. Remember that a faculty group must have at least 2 faculty members but no more than 6. These sheets will remain in the possession of the OLEF Executive Director and will not be disturbed with the application packet to the assessors.

Only one paper copy of each faculty member's agreement sheet needs to be included in the packet.

FACULTY MEMBER 3 (If not applicable, leave blank but still include in application packet)

Please neatly print your name:

Please sign with your usual signature:

Please enter today's date:

Agreement 1 "I approve of the above answers (Nos. 1-60)."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 2 "I understand that for transcript purposes, the director and/or board has the right to require a final grade for any learning unit I teach, facilitate, or evaluate. I further understand that this final grade will be redundantly archived by the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 3 "I approve of the initial and annual fees and dues that the OLEF is requiring for the application and maintenance of accreditation through the OLEF."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 4 "I understand, approve of, and am willing to comply with the OLEF's expectation that, upon this school's having held OLEF accreditation for at least two consecutive years, I occasionally serve as a blind, non-reciprocal and non-remunerated assessor to other application packets similar to this one."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 5 "I give permission to the OLEF to do a background search on me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 6 "I am willing to administer the OLEF evaluations directly to my students and to oversee their being sealed and mailed back to the foundation."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 7 "I grant permission to the OLEF to examine the grounds for any student or peer complaint registered with the foundation concerning me."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 8 "In my presence, I will allow an OLEF representative to physically examine my birth certificate, my driver's license, and/or my social-security card."

(Signature) _____

Agreement 9 "I agree to provide the OLEF with a current photo of myself that may be used in the foundation's evaluation forms in assessing my work among students of this college."

(Signature) _____

Initial-Accreditation Application End Page

This page signals the end of the initial-accreditation application. Please place this page at the end of the complete application and include it in the submission.

Only one paper copy of this end page needs to be included in the application packet.